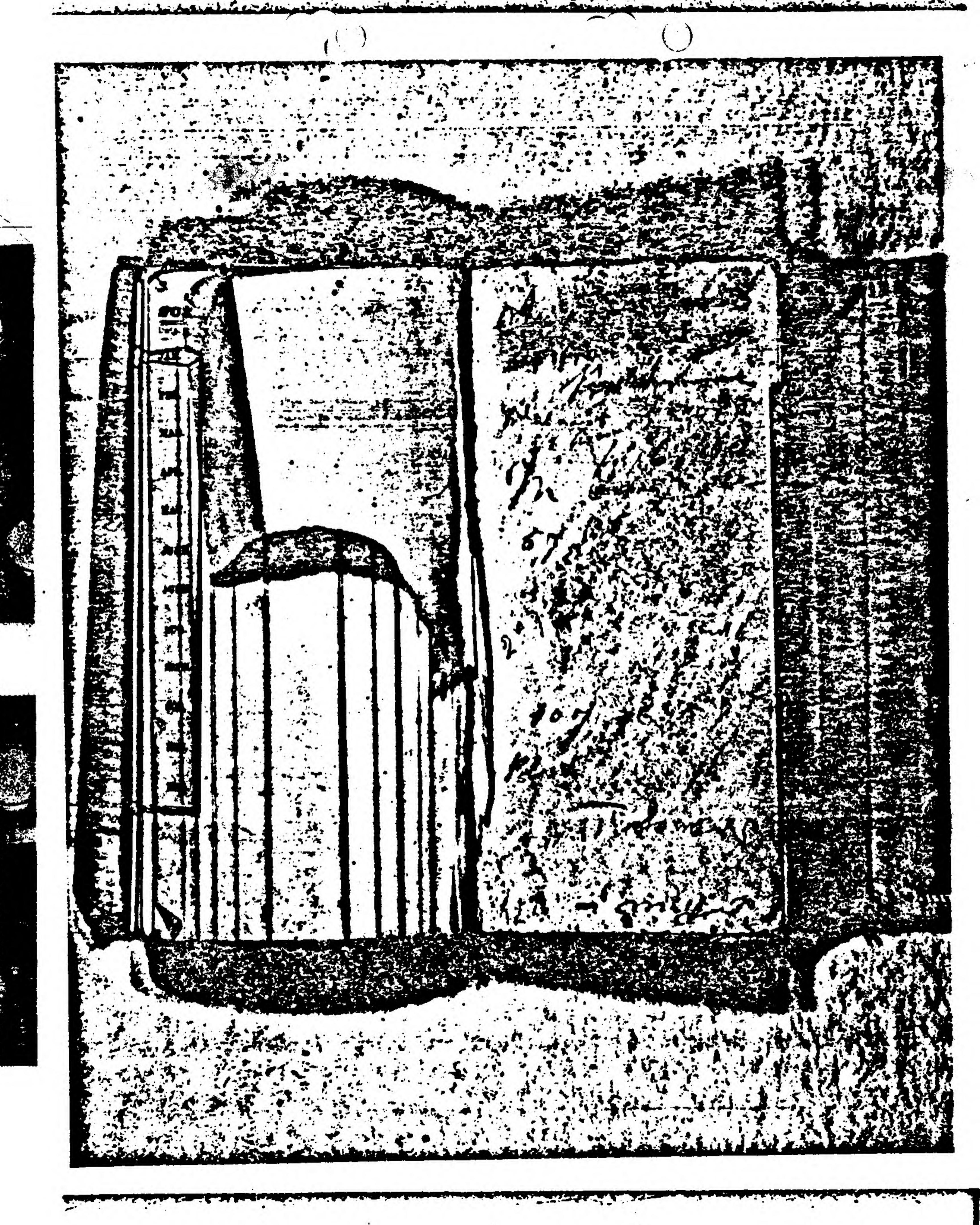
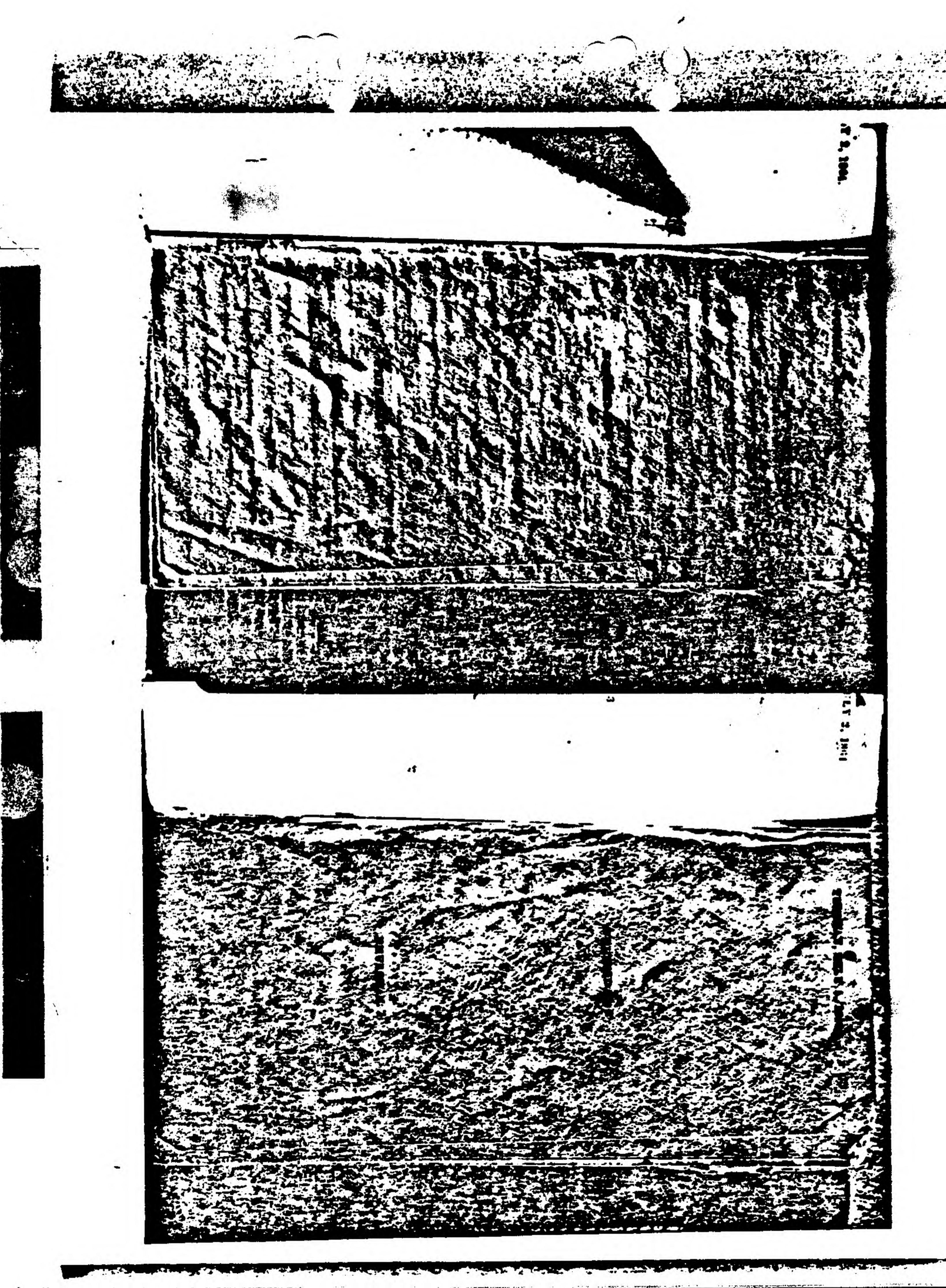
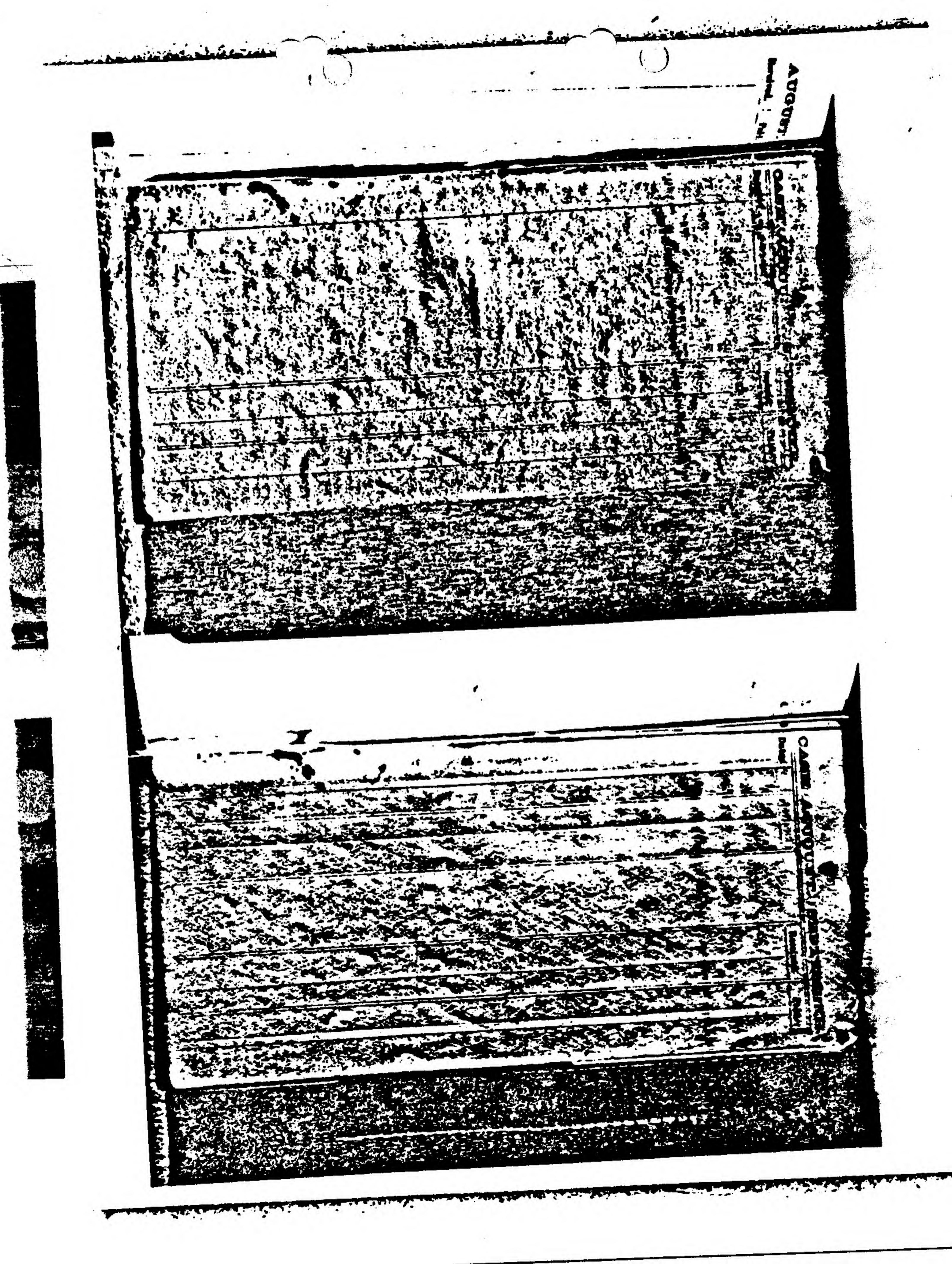
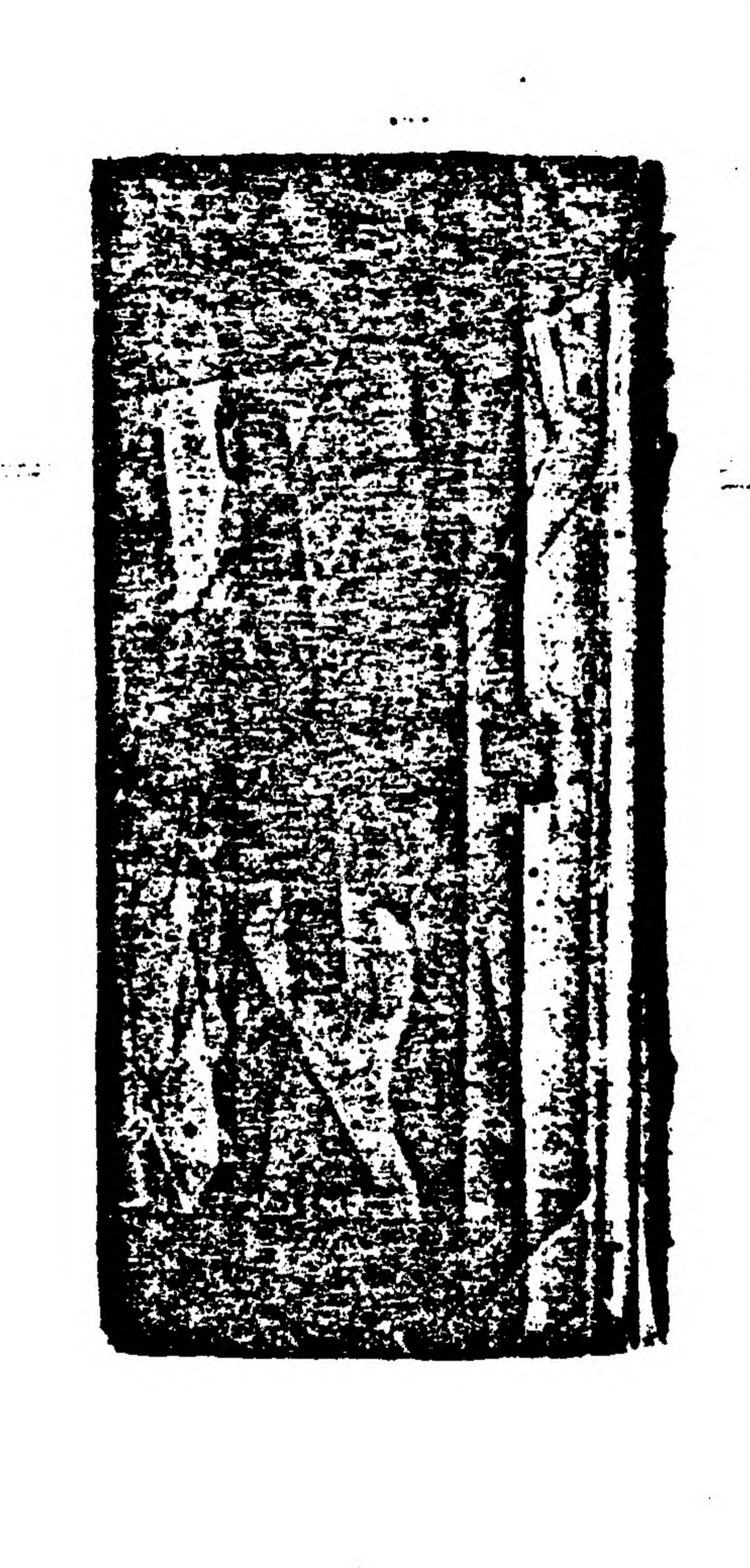


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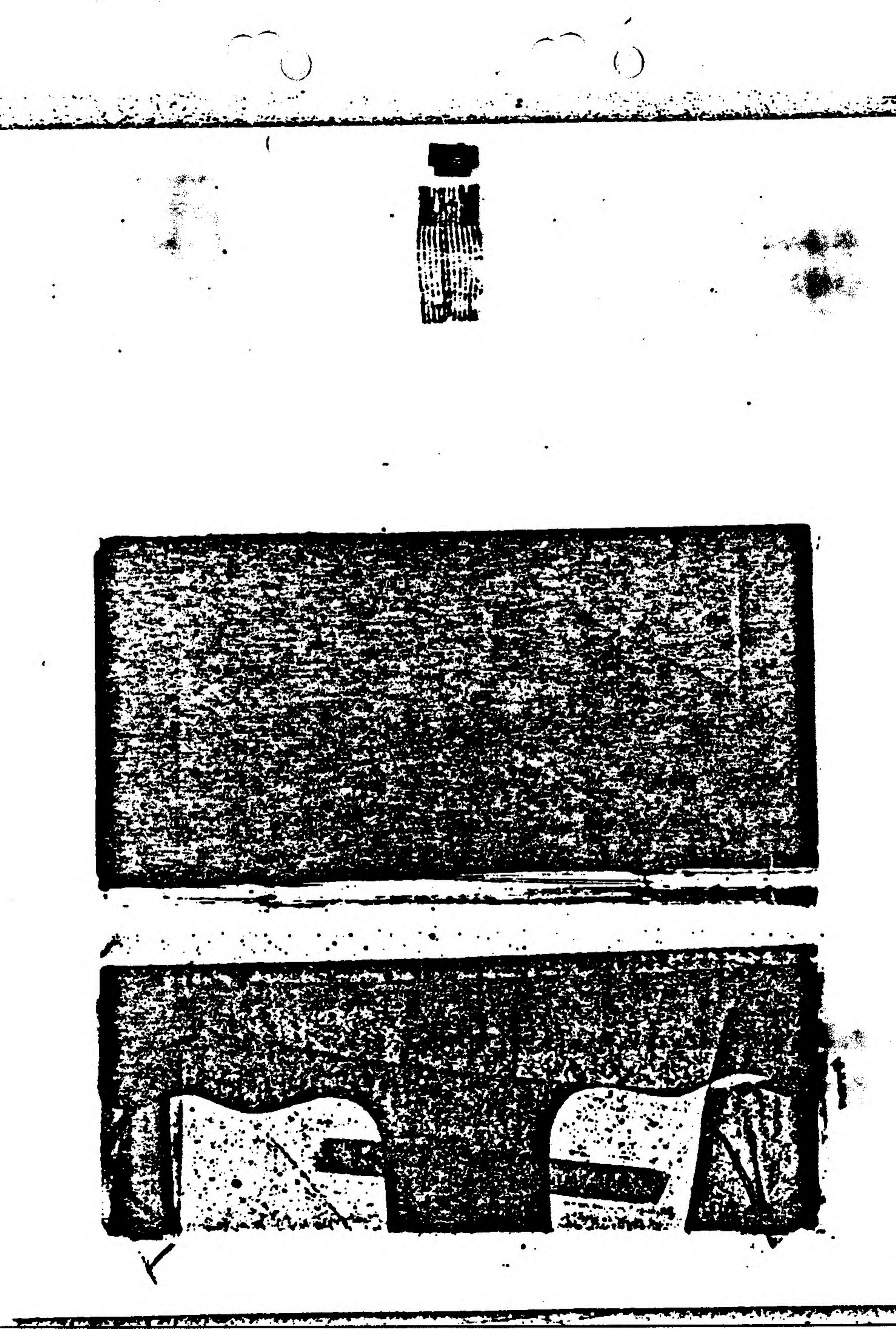




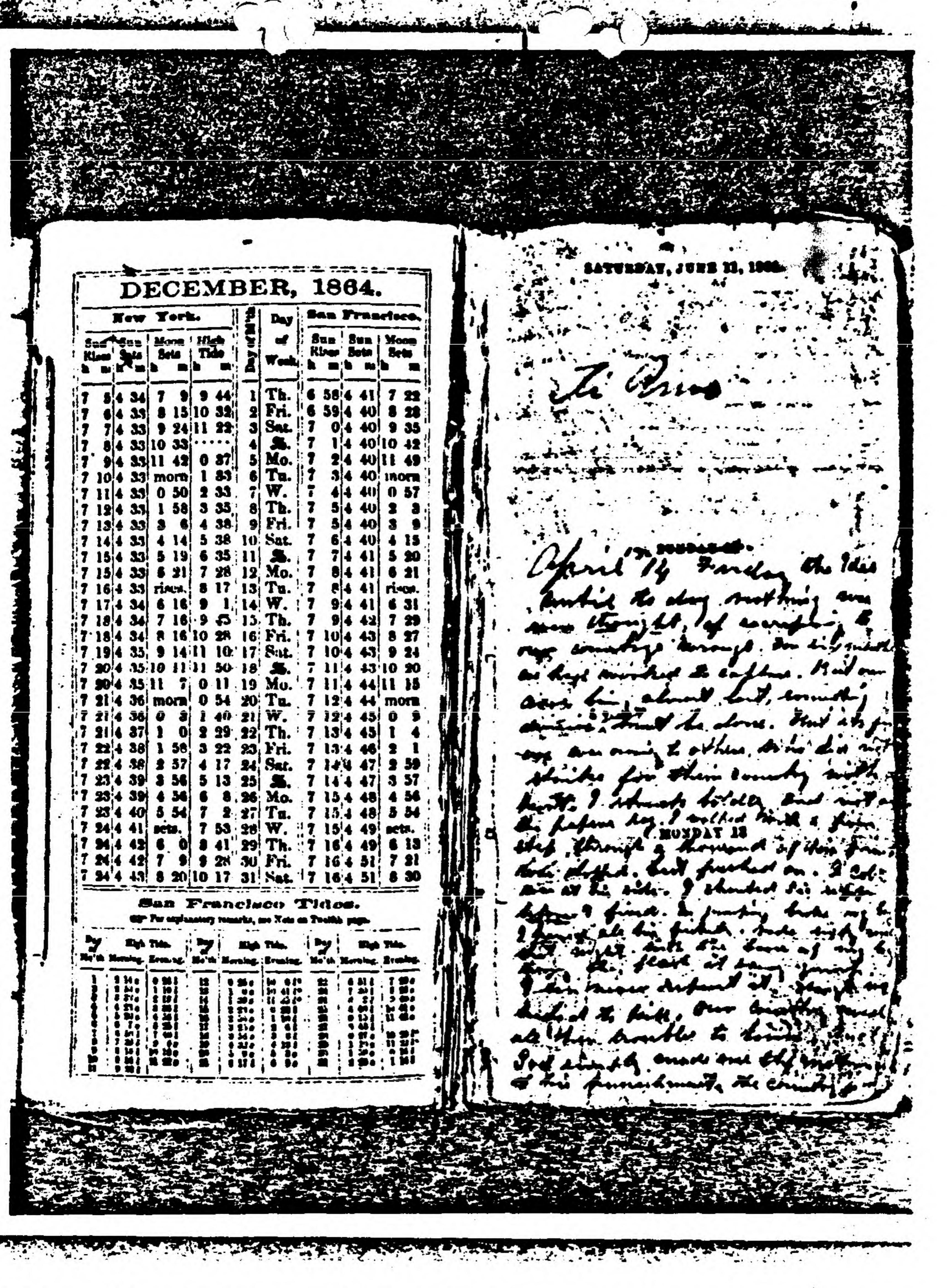


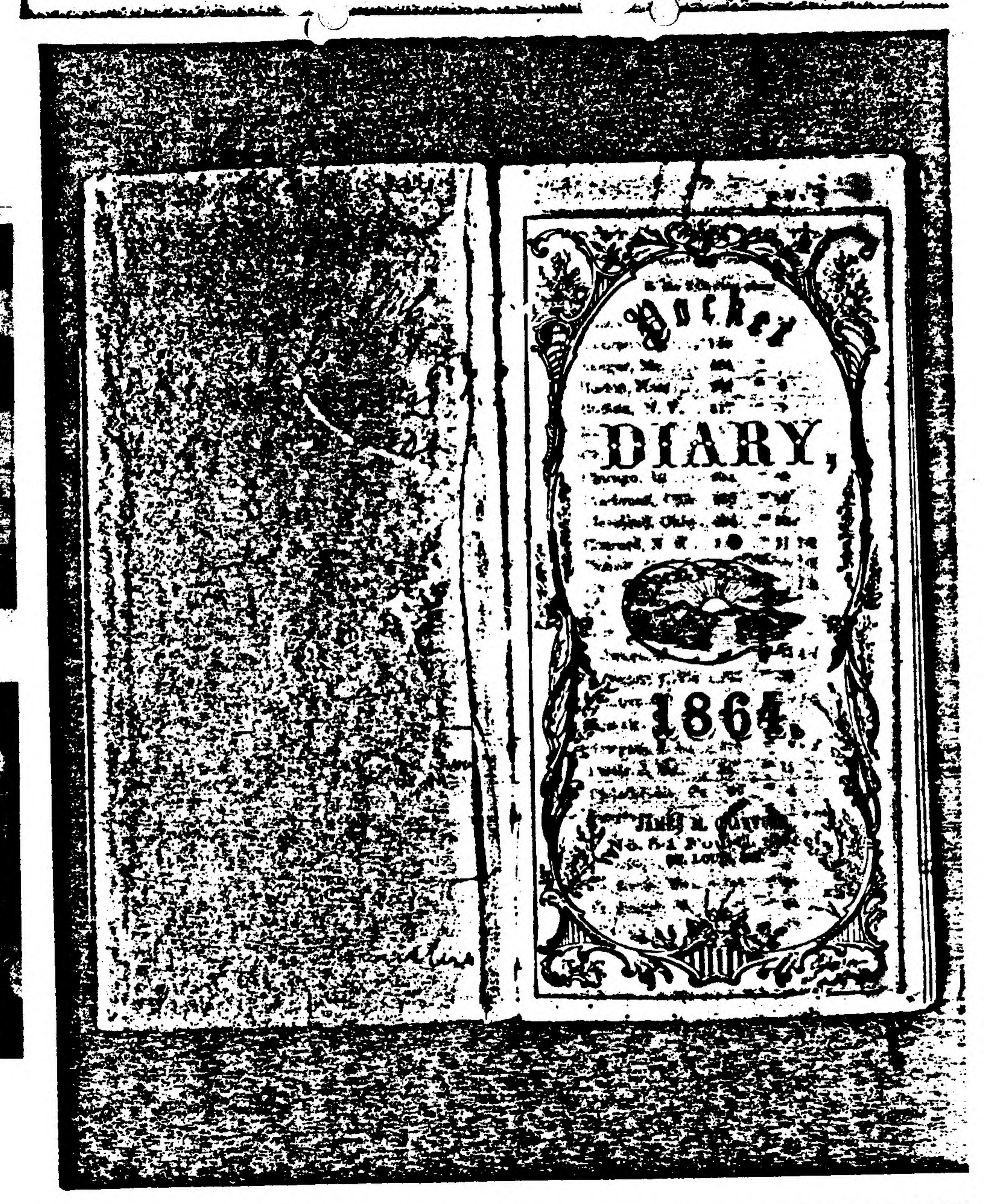


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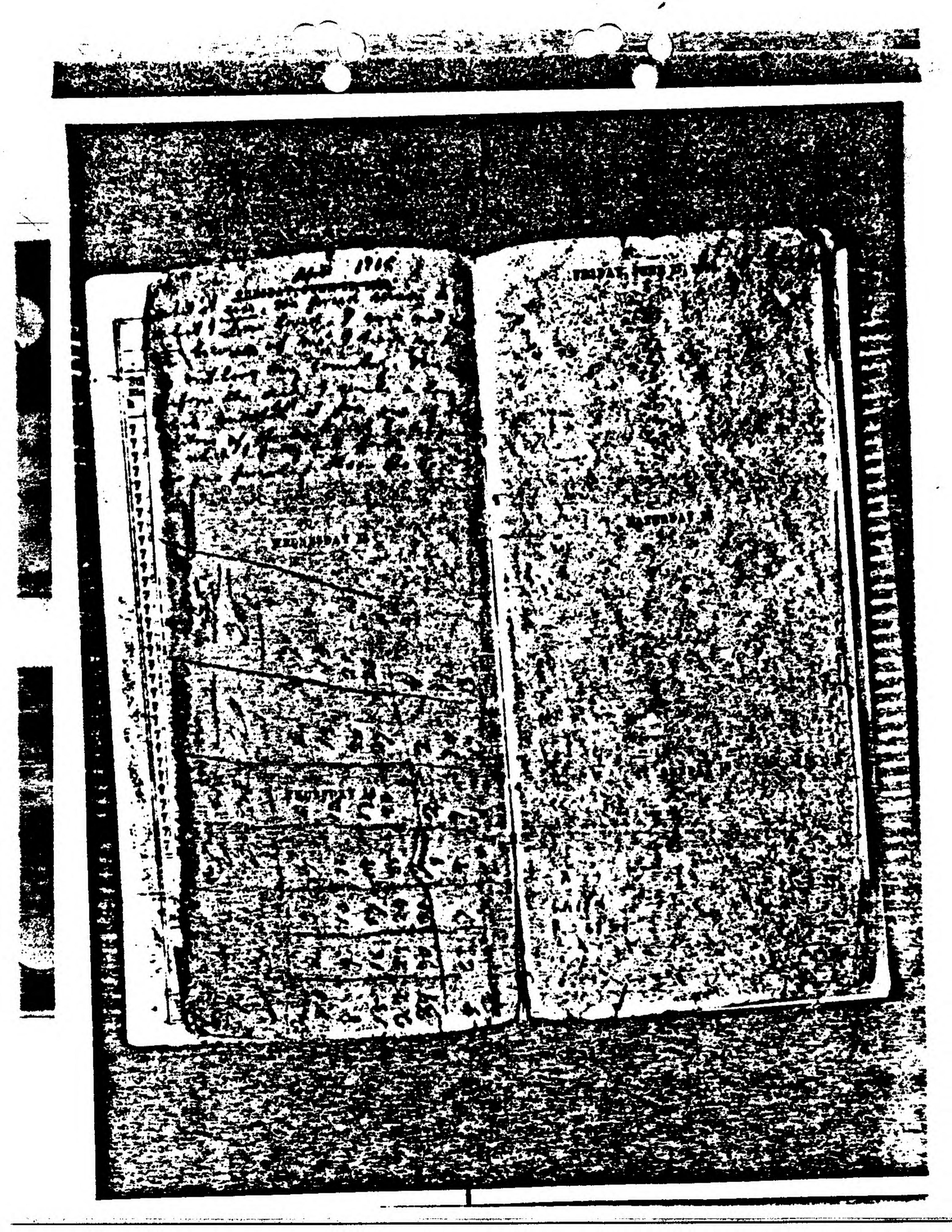


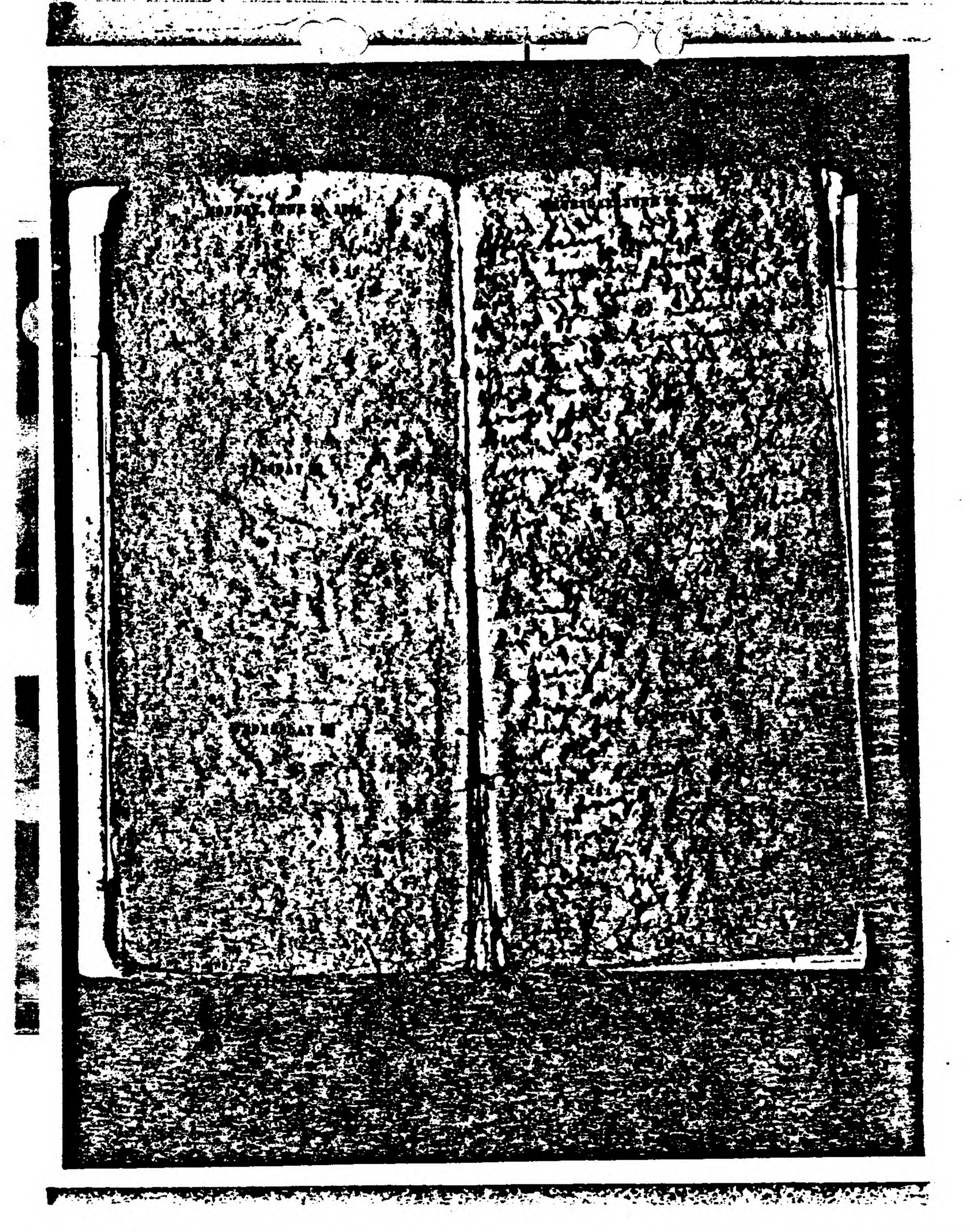


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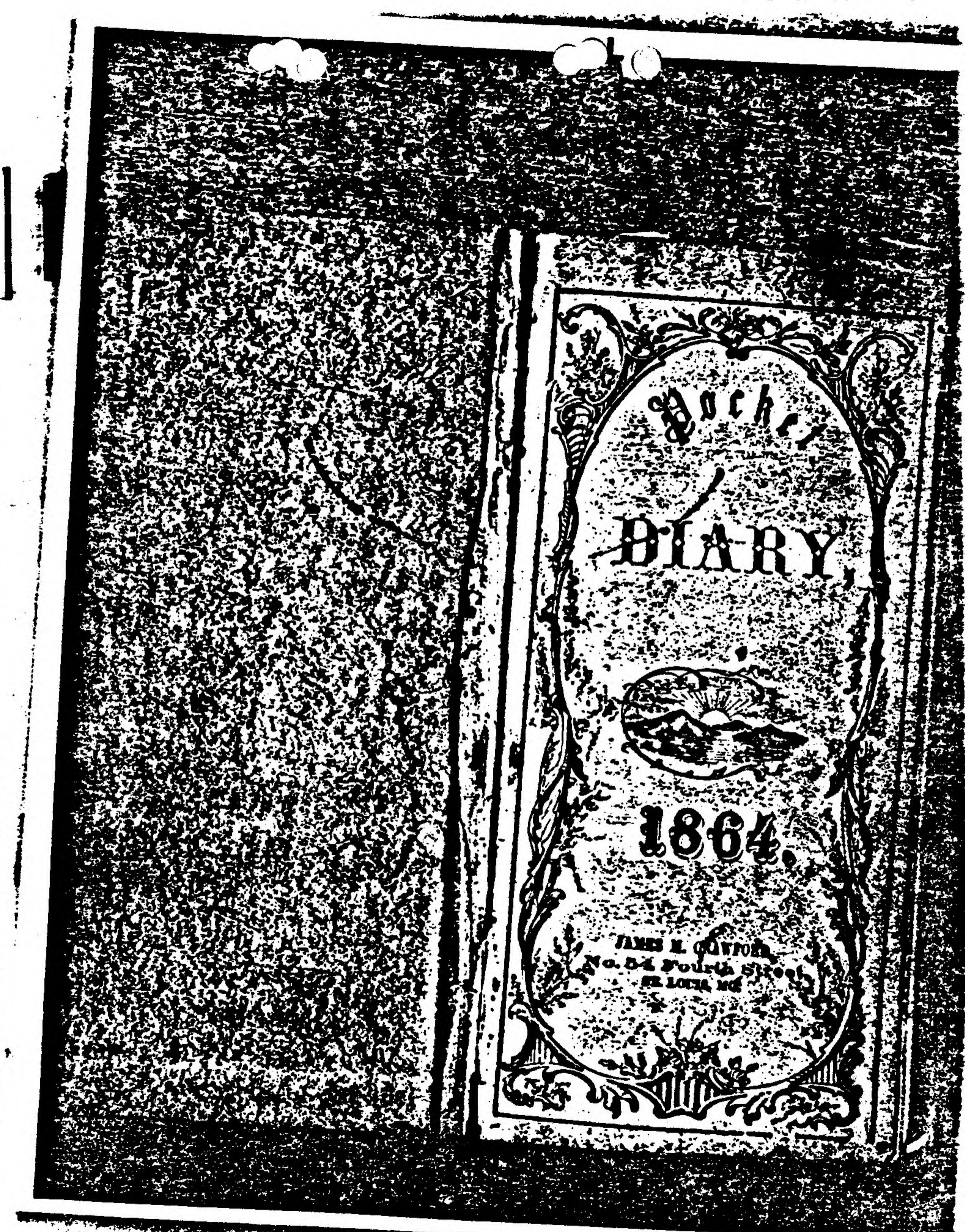
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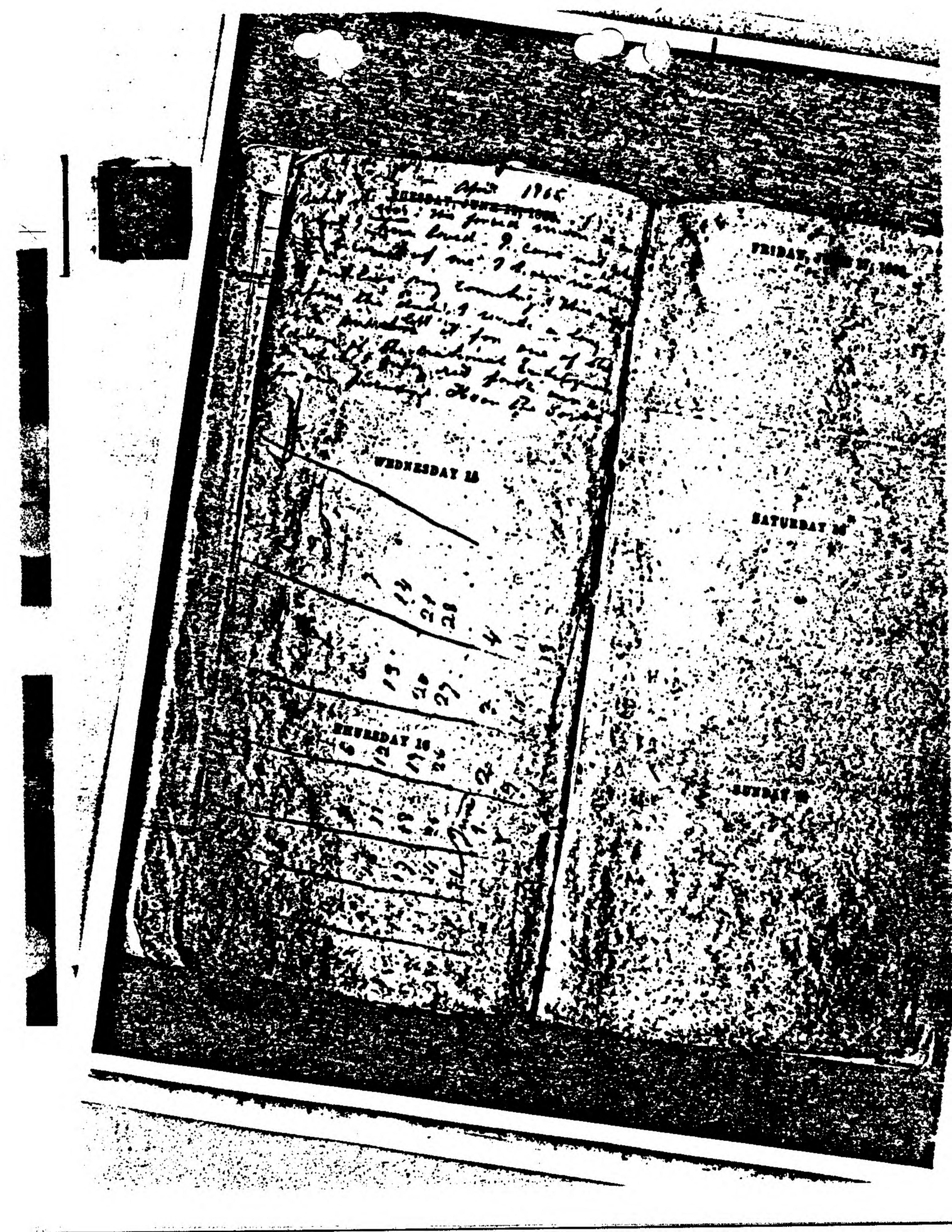




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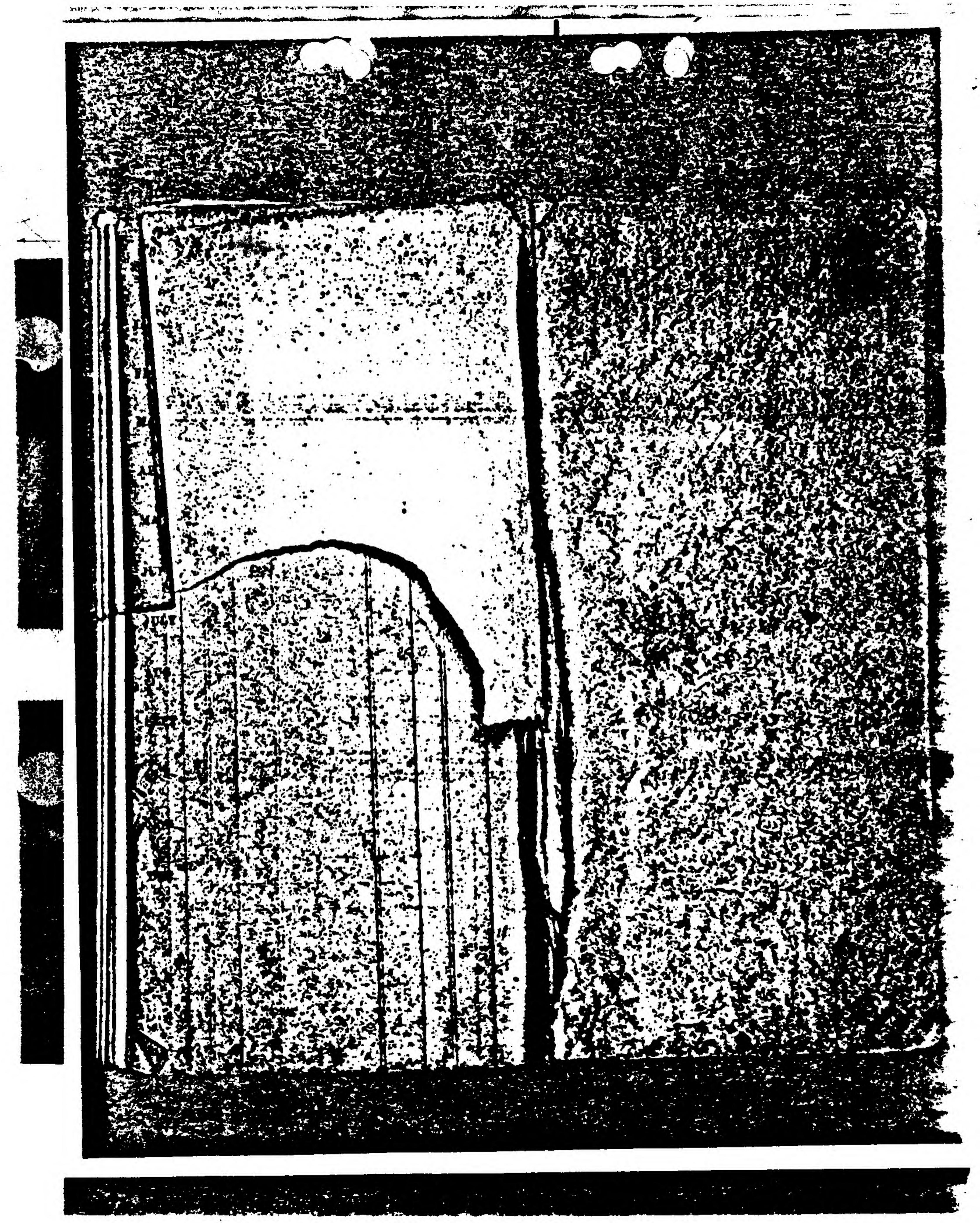


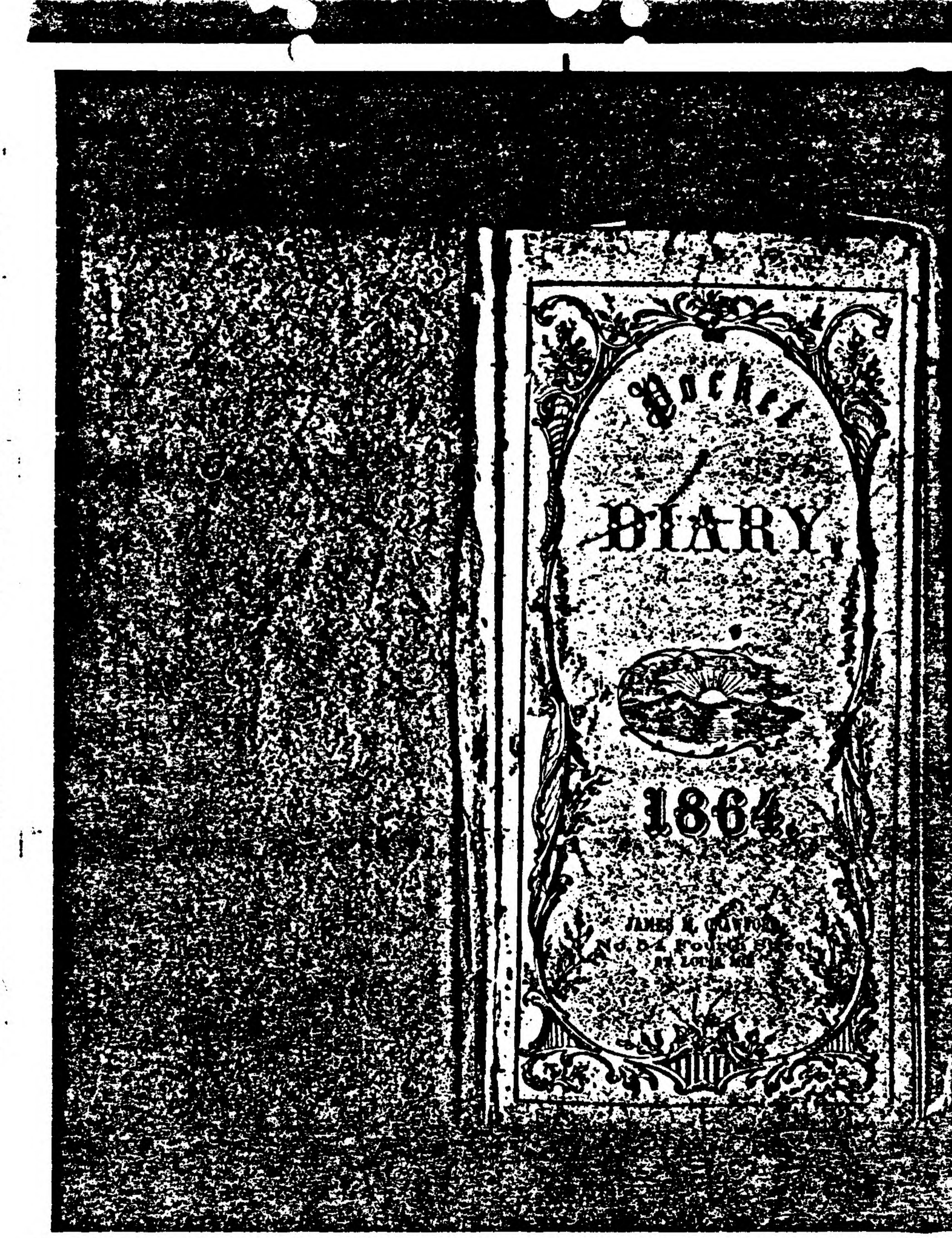




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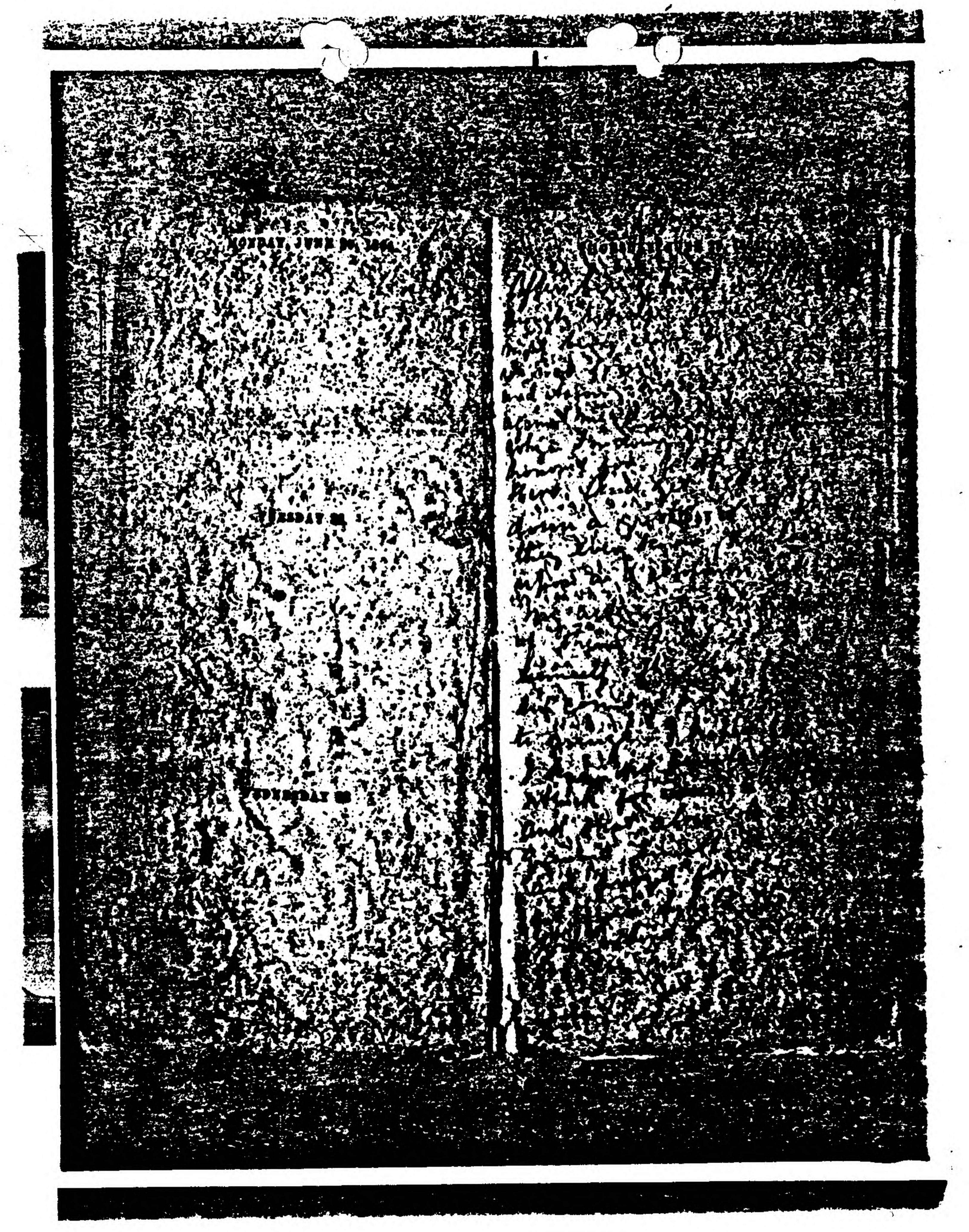
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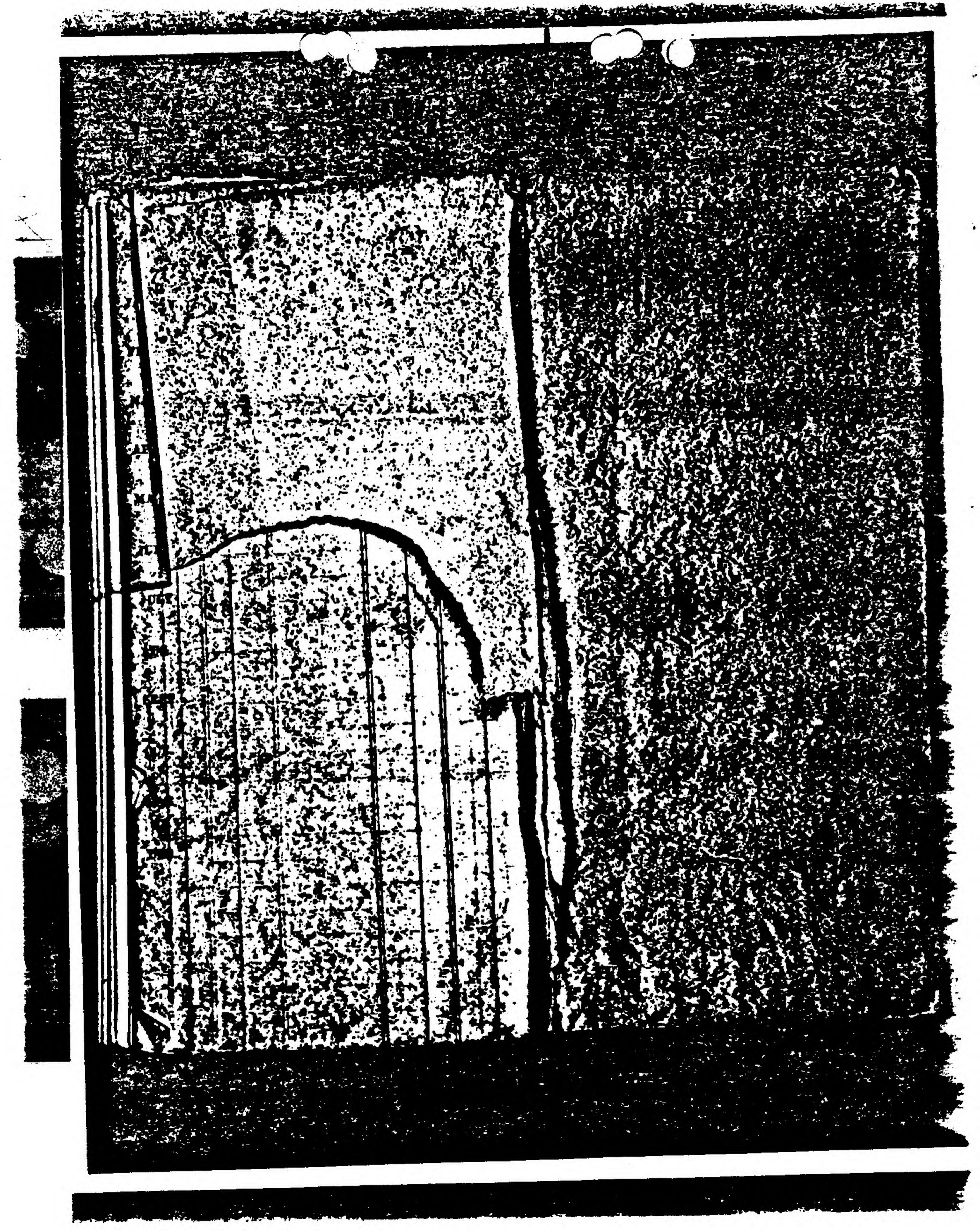


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IN REPLY BEFER TO:

K18-NCR (MIRR)

UNITED STITES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION 1100 OHIO DRIVE, S. W. WASHINGTON, D. C: 20248

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. Clarence Kelly Director Federal Bureau of Investigation Washington, D.C. 20005

1:1615073

Dear Mr. Kelly:

豆

This office has requested the loan from the National Archives of two letters written by John Wilkes Booth... We hope, through the services of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, to be able to authenticate the Booth diary in the Ford's Theatre collection by a comparative analysis of the handwriting.

Regional Curator Gordon Gay has been working with the FBI on an earlier project involving a detailed examination of the Booth diary. We have discussed with your staff the possibility of the handwritin analysis while the diary is in your hands. At this time, we wish to request your assistance in such a study.

As soon as we get clearance from the Archives for the loan of the We have discussed with your staff the possibility of the handwriting

booth letters, we will be in contact to further discuss this project.

We appreciate your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Acting Regional Director, National Capital Region

75-216208-

3 JUL 6 1977

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OPTIONAL FORM NO. 10 JULY 1873 FOITION GSA FPMH 141 CFR: 101-11.8

UNITED STATES GOVER..MENT

Memorandum

Mr. Kelleher

Robert T. Kelly

1 - Mr. Kelleher

1 - Mr. Herndon

1 - Mr. Kelly

1 - Mr. Lilja DATE:

8/3/77

1 - Mr. Mones

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LINCOLN ASSASSINATION

On 5/19/77, Gordon Gay of the Department of Interior, National Park Service, National Capitol Region, Washington, D. C., furnished to the FBI Laboratory a diary purportedly belonging to John Wilkes Booth. The Department of Interior requested that the FBI Laboratory examine the diary in a effort to determine if it contained any invisible writing, alterations or other characteristics which would be considered unusual.

A thorough forensic photographic examination was conducted of the entire diary. Some of the special techniques utilized included, ultraviolet reflectance, visible fluorescence with ultraviolet excitation, reflected infrared, infrared luminescence, and x-ray. In addition, the diary was also examined for indented writings. The only unaccountable indented writings were found on a page captioned "cash account September." This page was preceded by a single missing page. The limited text of the indented writings noted could not be determined. The only examination remaining to be completed by the Laboratory is the comparison of the writings in the diary with pages of purported known writings of John Wilkes Booth. These purported known writings were also furnished to the Laboratory by the National Park Service.

As a result of the examination of the diary, no invisible writings obliterations, alterations or other unusual characteristics were found. There were portions of the writings that have been obliterated or worn away through age and wear and tear on the diary itself.

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CONTINUED - OVER

Buy U.S. Savings Binds Regularly on the Payroll Savings Plan

5010-110

Memorandum to Mr. Kelleher RE: LINCOLN ASSASSINATION

In order to state absolutely whether or not any secret writings existed in the diary, other examination techniques would have to be utilized which would be destructive to the diary.

In summation, all appropriate and non-destructive examination techniques have been utilized and nothing of any value has been found.

The above information relating to the examination of the diary was orally furnished to Mr. Gay and on this date Mrs. Pam West, of the National Park Service advised the Laboratory that the Ford Theater Museum curator had been interviewed by Mr. Les Whitten. The resulting information published in the Washington Post on this date is in fact reasonably accurate and was a result of that interview.

ACTION: For information.

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UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

Mr. Kelleher

R.T. Kelly - RIN

BJECT:

LINCOLN ASSASSINATION

1- Boynton

1- Mones

1- Kelleher

1- Kelly DATE: 8/4/77 Dop. AD Adm. ...
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As a result of two articles published in the 8/3/77 Washington Post an inquiry was received from WRC-TV (NBC affiliate-ch 4) concerning the FBI's "investigation" of the John Wilkes Booth diary.

It was jointly decided between us and Skip Larson of the National Park Service that no one should be allowed to photograph or handle the diary because of its condition, however we could furnish black and white photographs if requested.

At approximately 2:30 p.m., 8/3/77, Mr. Larson and Mike Harmon, both of the Ford's Theater Museum, National Park Service and Kelly Burke, Reporter WRC visited the laboratory and discussed captioned matter with the examiner, SA Barry L. Mones. SA Mones provided a few enlargements of the diary, explaining what each was and made it clear to Mr. Burke that the FBI was not investigating this matter but merely providing laboratory assistance because of the historical value at the specific request of the Department of Interior, National Park Service.

ST 11/REC-72/5- 2/6/206-4

Mr. Harmon wanted to know if it would be possible to match any loose pages with the cut remaining portions in the diary. He was advised that while a predetermination as to the value of the examination could not be made it certainly should not be ruled out if the pages became available.

57 AUG 10 1977

(continued over)

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Memorandum Kelly to Kelloher. Re: LINCOLN ASSASSINATION

All three individuals clearly understood that short of destructive testing, all forensic examinations of the diary revealed nothing of significance or value and that in probability there was no visible writing in the diary. Mr. Burke was most thankful for our assistance and the photographs, expressing that he had a 5:00 deadline.

Mr. Larson advised that a letter from his office to us will be forthcoming giving us blanket permission to release any photographs requested in this matter.

Recommendation: None. Information only.

SER FEMR (41 CERT 101-11,4

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

Mr. Kelleher /////

OM :

Robert T. Kelly/F/

BIECT:

LINCOLN ASSASSINATION

l - Mr. Kelleher
l - Mr. Kelly
l - Mr. Mones

DATE:

8/12/77

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Telephone Rm. _
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Re memorandums dated 8/4/77 and 8/9/77.

PURPOSE:

To advise of a telephone call from to the FBI inquiring of the status of the John Wilkes Booth Diary examination.

DETAILS:

At 11 a.m., 8/11/77, a phone call was received in the Special Photographic Unit by SA Joseph M. Avignone, Document Section, Laboratory.

The caller identified himself as a newspaper article written by Haynes Johnson, washington Post, 8/3/77, relating to had called for SA Barry L. Mones captioned matter. who was on eight hours of annual leave. Avignone took the call and explained that Mones was not at work and would be back tommorrow. Started asking Avignone questions about the captioned matter and Avignone explained that the case was assigned to Mones and Mones had conducted the examinations and Avignone had no first hand knowledge of the results of the examination. Avignone told to call Mones back on Friday, 8/12/77. Inquired "Why is the report taking so long?". Avignone stated that the wording of guestion implied that that report was taking too long and that the (Avignone) had no basis to opinion. asked Avignone when share his would be receiving a copy of the report. Avignon he i

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REC-26

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1 - Mr. Bointon (7150)

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CONTINUED - OVER
Buy U.S. Savings Rends Regularly on the Payroll Savings Plan

To: Mr. Kelleher

RE: LINCOLN ASSASSINATION

that he did not know that would receive a copy of the report since this was a submission from the Interior Department and that the report to Avignone's knowledge would be sent to the Interior Department. continued with questions regarding the results and Avignone again tried to explain that Mones and not Avignone was conducting the examination and stated something to the effect that that's the trouble with the government. He further rambled on about that he knew that the FBI had gotten the diary back from the Interior Department after Jack Anderson's column had appeared and that we conducted the handwriting examination from the diary and had returned the diary to the Interior Department. Avignone attempted to explain that handwriting comparisons can be made from high quality photographs but interrupted and stated that he has talked to handwriting experts all over the country and he knows for a fact that comparisons can not be made from photographs. At this point Avignone stated "Sir, you're wrong -I'm not going to argue with you anymore - I don't want to quibble about this matter - Call back tommorrow and talk to Mones -It has been my pleasure talking to you - Goodbye." At this point the telephone conversation was terminated.

RECOMMENDATION:

None. For information only.

UNITED STATES GC LKNMENT

Memorandum

ir. Kelleher

FROM

LINCOLN ASSASSINATION

1 - Mr. Kelleher

- Mr. Kelly

- Mr. Mones

3/9/77 DATE:

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Tolephone Rm. Director Sec'y ____

Reference memorandum in this matter, 8/4/77.

PURPOSE:

To advise of a telephone call from to the FBI inquiring of the status of the JOHN WILKES BOOTH diary examination.

DETAILS:

At 11:00 a.m., 8/5/77, a phone call was forwarded from the FBI Press Office to SA Barry L. Mones, Document Section, Laboratory.

The caller identified himself as a newspaper article written by Haynes Johnson, Mashington Post, 2/3/77, relating to captioned in very rapid succession, began asking matter. questions relating to what and how the FBI Laboratory reached its findings concerning the JOHN WILKES BOOTH diary. He wanted verification about the number of missing pages, any areas of abrasion or obliteration, and a page which he claimed was chemically eradicpess.

SA Mones did not provide with any

information other than that which is already public does not have knowledge. control of the purported missing lo pages from the diary but that they are in the hands of an elderly descendant of the Stanton family. Stated that the pages should be made available for comparison to authenticate with the diary and said that he believes that they may become available in the near future. He stated that the descendant in possession of the pages is hesitant at, or is this time because he fears of possible reprisals against

1 - Mr. Boynton (7150)

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Buy U.S. Savings Bonds Regularly on the Payroll Savings Plan

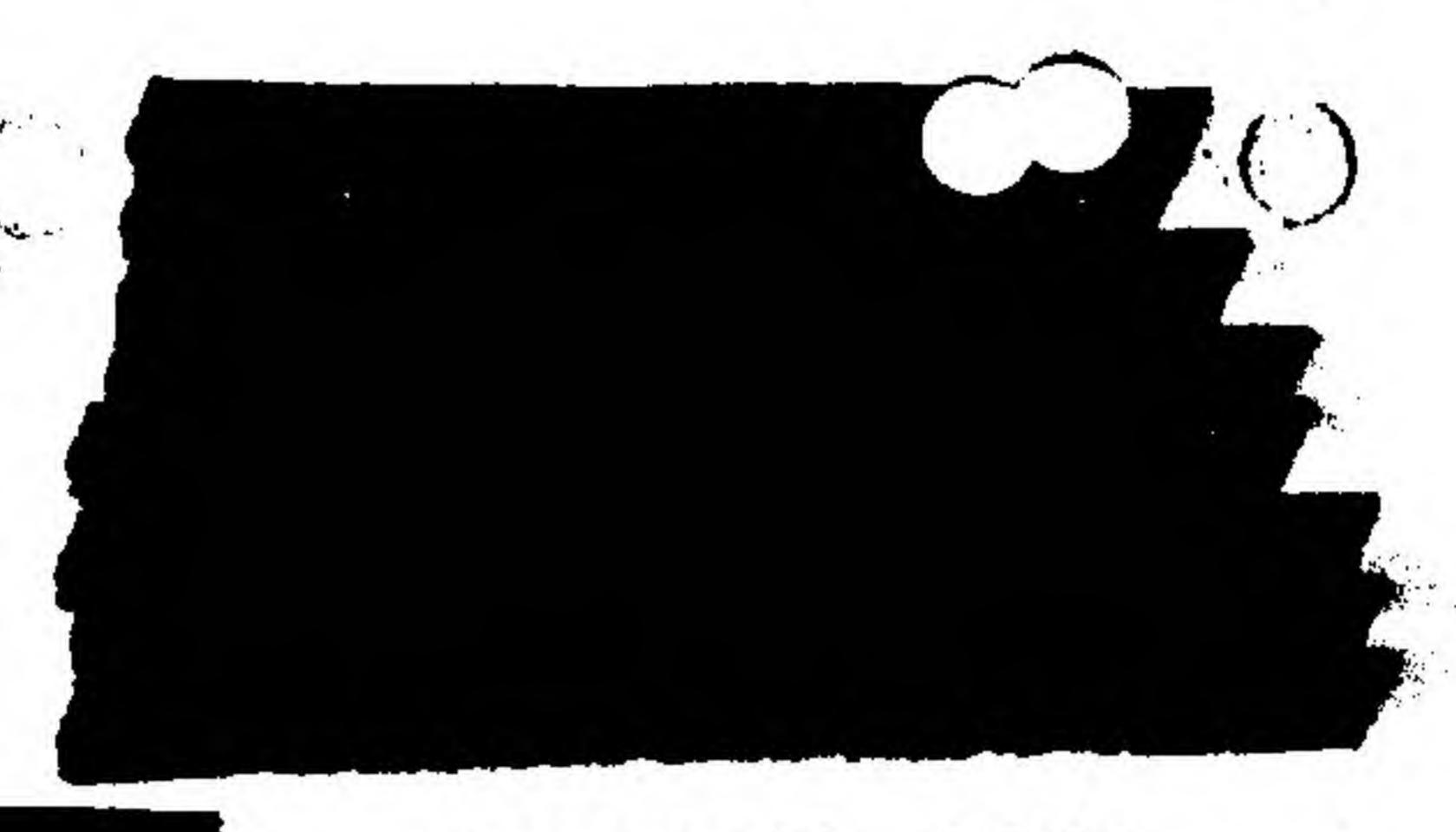
MEMORANDUM TO MR. KELLEHER LINCOLN ASSASSINATION 8/9/77

him when the "truth" is known. Stated that he personally has already been "blackmailed and threatened" but is only interested in this matter because he wants to see the truth come out while others such as Sunn Films are in it for the money and publicity.

RECOMMENDATION:

None. For information only.

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August 15, 1977

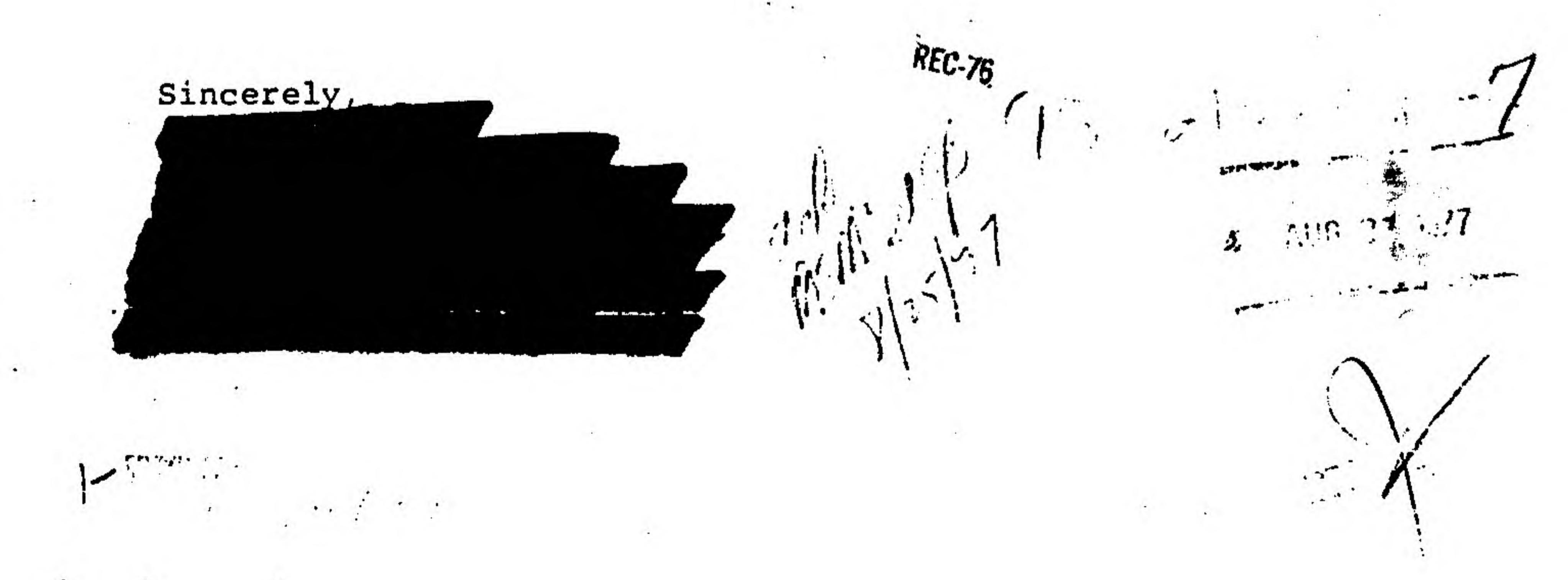
Director Clarence M. Kelley
Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
Washington, D.C. 20535

Re: Lincoln Assassination

Dear Director Kelley:

Several years ago I prepared a research paper for a history course which covered the possibility of Edwin McMasters Stanton's involvement in the conspiracy to murder President Lincoln; the apparent key to the puzzle appeared to lie in the missing pages which had been cut or torn from the assassin's diary. I now have learned from a recent Jack Anderson column that Mr. Joseph Lynch of Worthington, Massachuetts had discovered that he believes to be the missing pages, and that they have been turned over to the Bureau for scientific examination.

My interest is apparent. If copies of the pages or their content are available, I would appreciate a copy. If you prefer not to release them directly, can you furnish me with Mr. Lynch's address so that I may communicate with him directly.



1 - Mr. Kelleher 1 - Mr. Carter 1 - Mr. Tykal, Rm. 7825

August 25, 1977

176



Your letter of August 15th concerning an examination of the John Wilkes Booth diary has been brought to my attention.

The FBI Laboratory has been requested by the United States Department of Interior to conduct an examination concerning the authenticity of the Booth diary. This examination is yet to be completed and there is no information available at this time. When the examination has been completed, the results will be sent directly to the United States Department of Interior. You should contact them at the following address for any additional information desired:

United States Department of Interior National Park Service National Capitol Region 1100 Ohio Drive, S.W. Washington, D.C. 20242

The missing pages you refer to have not been submitted to the FBI for examination and we are not aware of their whereabouts.

I hope this information has been of assistance

Assoc. Dir.

Dep. AD Adm. —

Dep. AD Inv. —

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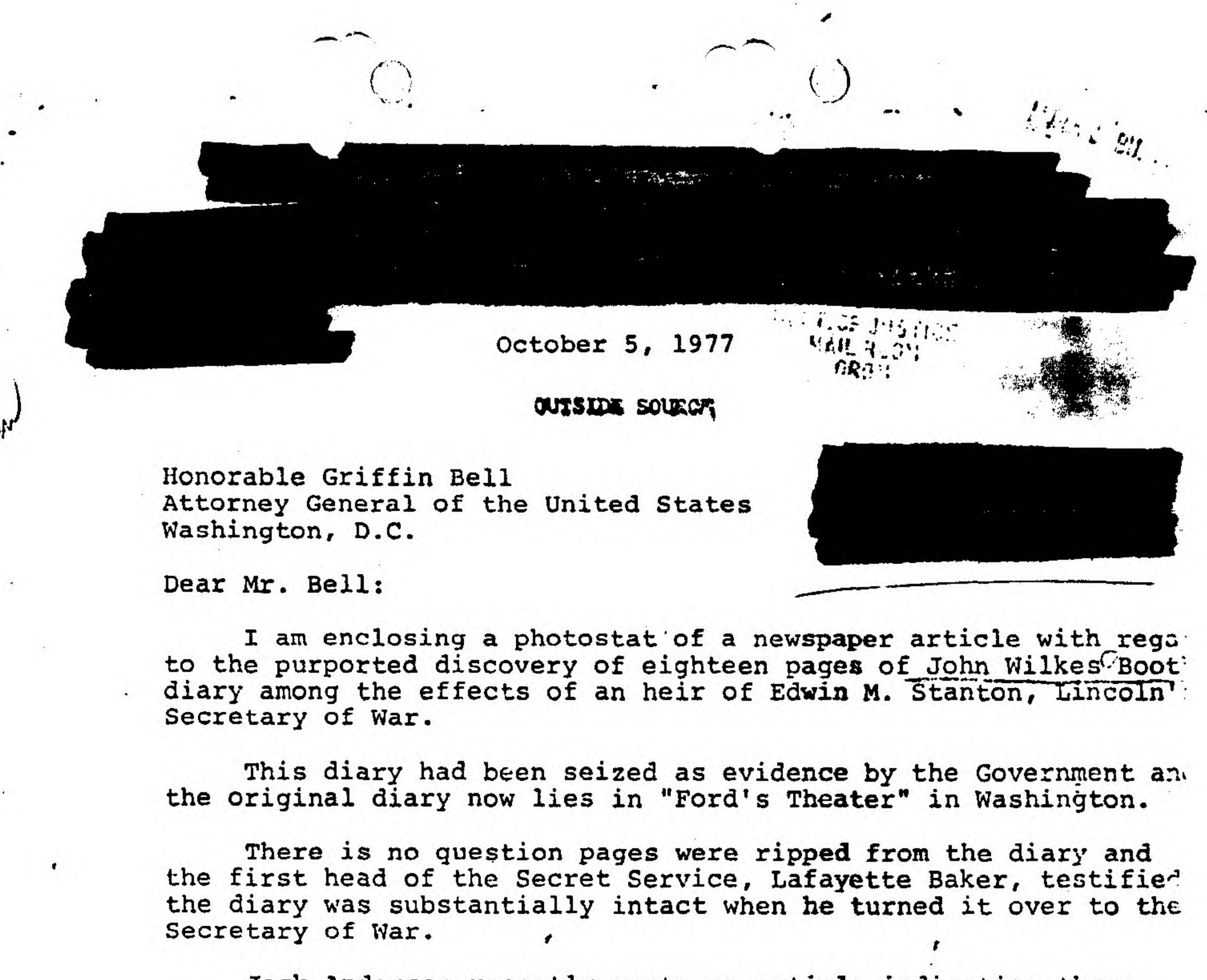
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to you.

sincettely yours, 05.

Thomas F. Kelleher, Jr. Assistant Director

4 AUG 31 1977



Jack Anderson recently wrote an article indicating these purported missing pages are being examined by the Federal' Bureau of Investigation for authenticity.

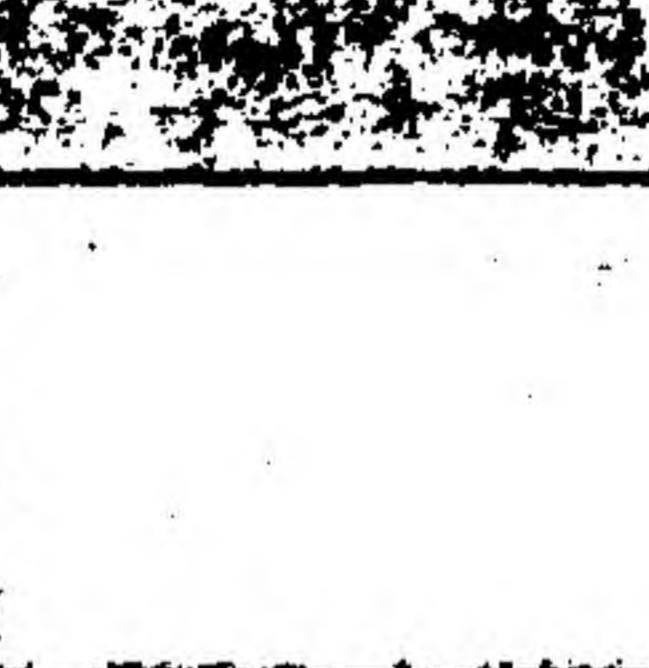
First, it infuriates me to think Stanton's heirs have mater: stolen from the Federal Government valued at between one quarter a million dollars. Secondly, since if this property were stolen from the Government, it is Government property and should be ret to the Government.

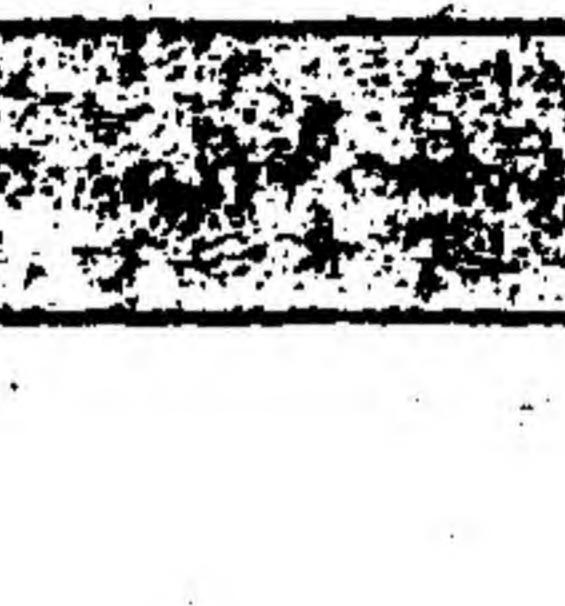
I am a Lincoln assassination conspiracy buff and feel the Government is under an obligation to secure these pages and that they should be made public. It is a pity that the assassination of our Sixteenth President is still clouded in mystery.

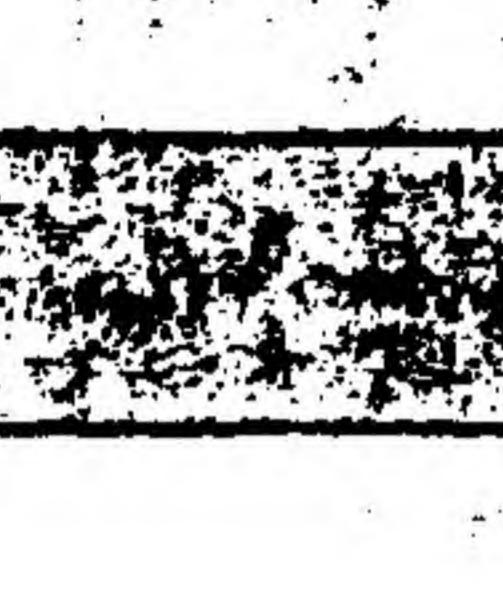
Very truly yours,

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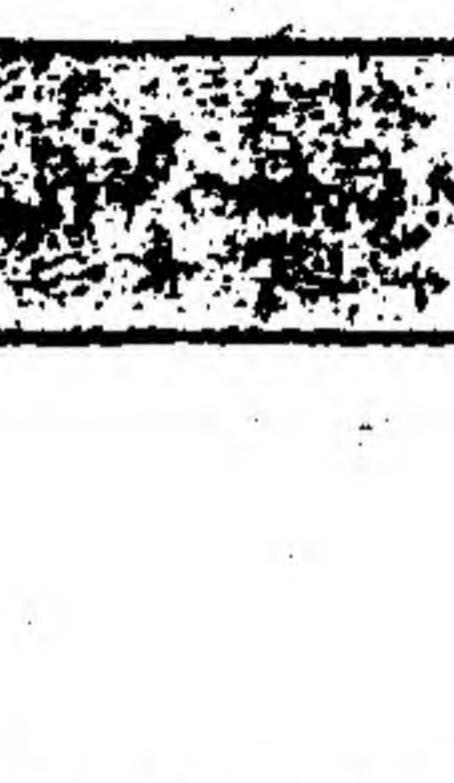












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Distribed as "an invitation in hoper hy the company. twee do the kumshae work that all reporter in real her investigators must de when he stumbued on a lead.

Hagar he was in Washington, D.C. at a Cit I'l. type gun show, when he heard and in Americana collector who had and the missing pages from Booth's die 'It took me nearly six weeks to track Lynch down," Baisiger says. After alling dealers from New Mork in E. ...m. he finally got a call back. He and Lynch began negotiations over the material And here. The hasn't alient's the story becomes too complex to united it this writing. Line the CSSC MIE

Lia - Fre 50055 Lynch estimated the Line of the material at a quarter of a million to a million dollars, and that Limit, action es the middleman for the heire, first publice of a quarter millien ch i'. Lynch denies this. The Stanton heirs, he says, didn't want to deal with anyone. "So far as they were concerned, the diary was a black spot on everyone concerned," he says. That is. Stanton clearly was implicated as the master conspirator. How would you like to be known as a direct decendant of the man who had Father Abraham . - ---- ---- --- : !! slain?

In the and, I would sold to the incrie company a transcript of the supposed diary, noise from his tape-recorded descriptions. The price was somewhere between \$10,000. The movie company claims to have done exhaustive work into authenticating the pages. They were evaluated by

the said to the Lincoln association's had by in turned up. New material is t alwa urning up but Harmon made the cail. In time, he met Lynch. Balsiger and other people from the movie company. One of them asked icr. and got, permission to phetograph the original British diary on display in the museum. There had been rumers, among the nordes of Lincoln assassination conspiracy bull's that Bootn's diery contained in isible

witer that, Hairbon is the government decided to profect itself. "We asked the FBI to examine the diary in our possession to alleviate any future uncertainty as to its authenticity, or any questions pertaining to 'hidden' writing." That was done. The diary is now back in its case in Ford's Thrater.

The FBI has never looked at the "missing pages" from the diary. As Harmon says: "Being a cautious historian, I have to say this: The burden of historical proof rests on Lyn.h. If 2 guy says, 'Hey. I have the decuments that say Mary Lincoln did it. it's the burden of that person to produce the documents in question. The only way anybody's going to be able to determino their authenticity is when they become they public decuments subject to public scrutiny and examination."

Harmon's a Civil War bull hunself. He recalls being fascinated by an event a year ago Lincoln's wa'let had been sealed inside a box maintained at the Smithsonian. It was opened during the bicentennial celebration. Guess what they found.

Five dollars - in Confederate moncy.

October 21, 1977



MINICIDE SOURCE

Your communication of October 5th to the Attorney General was referred to FBI Headquarters for acknowledgment and received on October 14th.

The FBI Laboratory was requested by the U. S. Department of the Interior to conduct an examination concerning the authenticity of the diary maintained by John Wilkes Booth. This examination was just recently completed and the results have been sent directly to the Department of the Interior.

If you desire additional information regarding this examination of the Booth diary, you should communicate with the U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Capitol Region, 1100 Ohio Drive, S.W., Washington, D. C. 20242.

The missing pages to which you refer have not been submitted to the FBI for examination and we are not aware of their whereabouts. REC-51

Assoc. Dir. .. Drp. AD Adn. . 0CT 2.1 Drp. AD Inv. ___ Asst. Dir.: Adni. Serv. Crim. Inv. _ ___ Fin. & Pers. ___

Sincerely yours, DE-16 23 OCT 25 1971

Andrew J. Decker, Jr. Assistant Director Records Management Division

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FBI/DOJ

August 8, 1977

Mr. Clarence Kelley
Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Washington, D. C. 20005

Attention: Mr. Barry Mones, Technical Analysis Laboratory

Dear Mr. Kelley:

I note in the Les Whitten story (copy enclosed) in the Washington Post for August 3, 1977, that your check of the John Wilkes Booth diary is still in progress. It is hoped that your sophisticated methods will raise some of the writing that does not appear to the eye. I send you here two pictures (made under special light) which show some of this writing. Please return these pictures.

There is also some writing opposite the calendar, faint at the top and slightly clearer toward the bottom. This appears to be a list of names. Perhaps this is beyond recovery by any means but the writing is there, clearly so. I am sorry that I do not have a picture of this page to send to you.

There is a growing controversy that your report can settle easily: how many pages (or sheets) are missing from the Booth diary? As you will note, this document is not properly a diary but rather is an 1864 memorandum book with spaced dates, presumably beginning with Friday, January 1, and ending with Sunday, December 31. It is alleged that eighteen of the missing pages have been located in the hands of a Stanton heir. It would be most helpful for future research for you to state in your report just which pages or sheets - are not now in this memorandum book. You could, for example, note either the missing pages or the pages that are there in chronological order. Either way will permit historians to reconstruct the memorandum book and to make comparisons with the "missing pages" if these are every released for such a purpose.

As I urged in my letter of June 23, every page should be photographed even if scanners reveal nothing. This will avoid mythmakers coming back later with doctored pictures or making a claim that the FBI missed something or deliberately withheld material as part of "a conspiracy." This is no idle fear as you can see from the editorial in the Civil War Times for August 1977 (copy enclosed)

A claim has been made that the diary (the one you are checking) was forged by the Government as part of a "cover-up." For



this reason historians are anxious that your report be definite in comparing the writing in the diary with the "To whom it may concern" letter and the "Dearest beloved mother" letter. This is the last chance for an answer, one way or the other. We are advised that the diary will never again be made available for such a purpose.

I am sorry to bother you on these points - all of which you are no doubt doing and doing well. Still, so much history rides on the documentation of what you do and how you do it.



711

Jack Anderson and Les Whitten

FBI Probes Lincoln Assassination

The FBI has quietly entered the investigation of another presidential assassination —this one the 112-year-old shooting of Abraham Lincoln while he watched a performance at Ford's Theater in Washington.

In many respects, the 1865 murder of Lincoln remains even more controversial than the 1963 killing of President John F. Kennedy. Murky questions hang over both tragedies.

The belated FBI inquiry into Lincoin's death may help to resolve such mysteries as these: Was Lincoln the victim of a secret conspiracy reaching into his own cabinet? Was Frederick Douglass, the Martin Luther King Jr. of the Lincoln era, also marked for murder? Did the assassin, John Wilkes Booth, actually escape and leave another man's body in his place?

New light on these questions is contained in some 18 pages that mysteriously disappeared from Booth's diary but may now have turned up. The diary reportedly was delivered intact to Lincoln's arrogant Secretary of War, Edwin M. Stanton, who has been linked by rumors to the assassination plot.

When the diary was later introduced into the Andrew Johnson impeachment hearings, it was missing some pages that had been neatly excised. Now an indefatigable American expert, Joseph Lynch of Worthington, Mass., has found what appears to be the missing pages.

He made the discovery while appraising some historical artifacts belonging to Stanton's heirs. The pages were locked in a box in the attic. The heirs had never opened the box; in fact, they had no key.

WI ULSE

The pages give a fascinating account, presumably written by Booth, and has confirmed that its page of his intrigues with Lincoln intimates shortly before the assassination. Some of the most prominent politicians of the period, including Stanton, are implicated.

Referring to a plot perhaps unrelated to the murder, Booth allegedly writes that he may be working for the Secretary of War himself. At another point, he declares: "I swear that I shall lay the body of this tyrant dead upon the altar of Mars." Apparently, Lincoln is the "tyrant," and "Mars," the god of war, could have been a code name for Stanton.

For years, the Booth diary, shorn of its mysterious pages, has been on display at Ford's Theater museum. But the Interior Department, which runs the museum, has now turned over the diary to the FBI. Its handwriting experts, with their ultraviolet scanners, microscopes and other detection devices, are trying to determine whether the diary itself is genuine.

They have made two important tentative discoveries. The diary contains no writing in invisibile ink, as some people have suspected for more than a century. The text also hasn't been altered, as others have thought. But the big question, whether the diary is entirely in Eooth's handwriting, remains to be settled.

The FBI's findings may establish whether the 18 newly discovered pages are authentic. Lynch gained considerable credibility by insisting that the missing pages were lined. Most experts had thought the diary was unlined. But the museum's curator, Michael Harman, has now in-

spected the diary more scientif those of Lynch's discovery, are lined.

Along with the missing diary; Lynch also found hundreds of intriguing items in the possessi the Stanton heirs. One is a lette newspaper, in which Booth repor outlined why he killed Lincoln.

A film company, Sunn Classi also been investigating the Linc sassination for a feature movie "The Lincoln Conspiracy." One researchers, Lawrence Moo ... Alexandria, Va., has turned up missing Booth letters and other Mooney believes he has evidenc Booth escaped and that another: body was put in his place.

Another researcher, Prof. Ra: of Indiana State University, ha. produced material which he ba shows Booth escaped at Garrett's where most experts believe h been killed by pursuing troops.

Still another ingredient has be jected into the mystery by Lyn: has discovered what looks lik name of Frederick Douglass, a leader, in the Booth diary. This ' the possibility that Booth may ha tended to kill Douglass, too.

Meanwhile, Curator Harman, government expert on the assa. tion, is taking an historian's can view about the renewed contro-"It's the original can of worm: said. "The government didn't cor a thorough investigation at the t. don't know whether we'll ever . the answers."

By Charles Rodri:

95-2/1.2008

Behind the res Civil War limer August 1977 ZAVEAT EMPTOR

Within a few weeks you are going to get very excited. From your radio, your newspaper, and seemingly every other minute on your television, you are going to be bombarded by a media blitz for a new motion picture. "New film proves conspiracy in Lincoln assassination," they will say: "Researchers have advanced the Lincoln assassination study more in a one-year crash investigation than it has been advanced in the previous 112 years"; "calls for joint Senate-House assassination committee to re-examine Lincoln's death"; "With the historical discoveries we've made, our film will make Watergate look like kindergarten plotting."

The new film, "The Lincoln Conspiracy," is produced by Sunn Classic Pictures, makers of a recent film on Noah's Ark and several wildlife movies. It presents a scenario which, if true, does indeed make events surrounding the Watergate break-in pale into insignificance. "The Lincoln Conspiracy" does nothing less than charge that there were four separate groups conspiring against Lincoln; that Secretary of War Edwin McM. Stanton and Lafayette Baket were deeply involved; that Booth was a tool of all four groups; that Stanton tried to replace Booth with a Confederate Captain James W. Boyd: that it was Boyd, not Booth, who was killed in the dark hours of April 26, 1865, at the Garrett farm in Virginia; that Booth escaped to freedom while Boyd's body was identified and buried as Booth's; that Stanton and other high officials, finding incriminating evidence against them in Booth's diary, conspired to suppress this evidence; that Baker was later killed to silence him, and much more.

Space does not allow telling of the whole story. Briefly, however. Confederate leaders in Canada want Lincoln out of the way, and feel that kidnapping him may get Southern prisoners freed to continue the fight. Northern cotton speculators don't want their profits cut by a lenient peace with the Confederacy. New York financiers feel the same, and the Radicals in Congress want an opportunity to ride roughshod over the conquered states. All four groups want Lincoln kidnapped or killed for their own ends. All work through Booth. Stanton and Baker know of the plots-are involved with one or more groups themselves—and Baker acts as liaison with Booth. Booth makes several kidnapping attempts and fails. Disillusioned with the actor, the Radicals want a change. Baker and Stanton get Captain James W. Boyd-a ruthless character-out of Old Capitol Prison in Washington and put him in Booth's place. While Boyd schemes, a resentful Booth changes his plans to murder, and finally kills Lincoln on April 14, just as Boyd is ready with his own plot, which included spiriting Lincoln, Vice President Andrew Johnson, and Secretary of State William Seward, aboard a Chaffey Shipping Company vessel to be born away to Bloodsworth Island in the Chesapeake where they would be killed.

Booth attempts to escape in company with one Edward Henson over an unguarded toute left open for Boyd Baker immediately sends Boyd and young David Heroldan accomplice of Booth's who is captured on April 15 and coerced into giving aid—out to catch the assassin. But the Boyd, fearing that Baker will betray him, decides to escaphimself, but he and Herold are trapped at the Garrer farm. Herold is taken, and Boyd slain. Since Boyd bore ... remarkable resemblance to Booth, he is at first mistake: for the assassin. When the error is discovered, the Wa Department covers it up rather than reveal that the wron; man is dead. Thus begins the cover-up, which Stantor completes by hiding Booth's diary and excising from it eighteen pages which incriminate scores of prominen Northerners. And Booth escapes to West Virginia and eventually, Europe.

It is an incredible story if true, and the way Sunn Classingoes about trying to prove it is equally incredible.

There is a special technique to this sort of thing. It in. been around a long time, and has been used most effec tively in recent years by Erich von Däniken in his "Charie" of the Gods" books. The formula is simple. To present. theory that no reputable authority has ever accepted, first attack the authorities. Sunn does this with a vengeance claiming that traditional historians of Lincoln's murder have perpetuated the cover-up by slavishly accepting the official government version of the assassination conspiracy. "Seldom has a traditional historian questioned the government's statements or acquired primary resource material from the heits of those who lived during the assassina tion period," claims a Sunn spokesman. As a tesult, Sunt. went after "findings overlooked by historians or suppressed by them because new revelations could be embarrassing to some of the established historical writers on the subject." And whatever they looked for they found—in abundance.

Next must come the hint of a continuing conspiracy to keep the truth from coming out. Thus, when it came to filming the picture, Sunn went to Savannah instead of doing it on location in Washington. "Our film," they say, "which rewrites the history of the Lincoln assassination, rattles a lot of skeletons in family and official closets. We wanted to keep a low profile until we finished filming." In a separate statement, Sunn maintains that a book by one of their consultants, Theodore Roscoe's Web of Conspiracy, "came under open attack by the Federal secret service... and the publisher was forced to let the book go." Can this possibly be the same Web of Conspiracy that was condensed for a Reader's Digest anthology and later served as the basis for a CBS TV documentary?

Next comes the presentation, and with it the repeated and insistent statement of startling revelations, one building upon another. Repetition brings familiarity, and has been stated often enough, it is cepted or fact, and presto! we have spacemen building cities in South America, a voracious triangle of ocean off Bermuda that swallows ships like anchovies, and a massive plot to assassinate Abraham Lincoln and cover up the crime.

It is a twentieth century technique, and thus it is fitting that it be coupled with another modern "invention" in the making of "The Lincoln Conspiracy." "Sunn uses computers to help make movies," proudly proclaims the publicity release. After extensive demographic surveys are made, sample audiences are polled on "which scenes offered the greatest enjoyment, which scenes were the most interesting, and which scenes they wanted longest." Essentially the audience tells what it likes best, and that is what Sunn gives them. This is fine for a fictional drama. but when applied to the presentation of what purports to be history, the result can be disastrous. No society can afford to have its understanding of its own past determined by market research on what people want to believe. Winston Churchill once remarked of the legendary King Arthur that, if he hadn't really lived, nevertheless "he should have." Application of market research to history reverses that somewhat. If the studies indicate that most people would prefer that King Arthur had really lived, then he did. The implications are frightening.

But all of this pales when compared to the real meat of the story, the startling and extensive new evidence upon which the film is based. All such courageous, trailblazing endeavors must have a host of evidentiary materials overlooked by "traditional historians." "The Lincoln Conspiracy" has them in abundance.

The most interesting items, of course, are the purported missing pages from Booth's diary, supposedly taken out by Stanton: In the first place, it was not a "diary," but an appointment book. Booth's was not a diarist's temperament. He wasn't even a good correspondent. Secondly, Sunn's promotional campaign is headlined with the claim that "Sunn's research turns up Booth's missing diary pages." Not so. The pages were found by a Massachusetts manuscript dealer in the hands of a Stanton descendant. Sunn merche located the dealer. But—and this is important-neither Sunn nor anyone else has seen the actual pages. Only the dealer has seen them, and he furnished a transcript to Sunn. For complicated reasons, the owner of the originals is reluctant to release them for authentication. Meanwhile, the manuscript dealer has shown copies of the transcripts to a few experts, and the best that can be said at this point is that no serious anachronisms have been found to disprove authenticity. Nevertheless, until some unimpeachable authority such as the Library of Congress authenticates the original pages, basing any historical claims upon what is found in the transcript is irresponsible. And incidentally, the National Park Service who is a real thirty-six leaves missing from the small brook in their custody, not eighteen as is usually stated.

Having dispensed with the diary, about which no defini-

evidence product support the scenario of "The Lincoln Conspiracy. About this evidence, certain ironclad conclusions are inescapable.

First, from several sources they have resurrected the old canard that Booth escaped capture and lived out his days in disguise and seclusion. The evidence for these oftrepeated claims has been put to the test by Chauncey Black of the Dearborn Independent, George S. Bryan in The Great American Myth, Otto Eisenchiml in The Shadow of Lincoln's Death, and a number of other investigators. The consensus is that all such claims are spurious.

Far more fascinating is the story of Captain James W. Boyd, who we are told was mistaken for Booth. A collec-



Sunn Classic Pictures photograph purporting to be Captain James W. Boyd.

tion of Boyd's papers is offered the his involvement in the kidnapping scheme and his timely death and mis-identification. There is a grain of truth here. In February 1865 Captain J.W'. Boyd, formerly Captain of Co. F., 6th Tennessee Infantry, was in Old Capitol Prison, and he was released on War Department orders. It is documented by his signed Oath of Allegiance, now in the National Archives in Washington. An interesting document this is. It shows that at the time of his release Boyd, a native of Madison County, Tennessee, was gray-haired, blue-eyed, and 6 feet-2 inches tall. The 1860 census for Madison County indicates that in 1865, Boyd would have been about 42 years of age.

We are asked to believe that this man was passed off not only to friends, but also to intimate family members, as John Wilkes Booth, a black-haired, brown-eyed, 5 foot-8 inch, 26-year-old! Six inches difference in height; sixteen years in age; gray hair instead of black; blue eyes rather than brown. It strains credulity beyond the limits of reason to assert that Boyd could pass for Booth with anyone. Sunn does offer a purported photo of Boyd which shows a man somewhat like Booth, but in no way corresponding with the description of J.W. Boyd. And cutiously enough, the man in the photo is dressed in a Federal uniform, a private's at that.

Equally interesting are the papers of the New York shipping firm of Chaffey and Biggs. It is claimed that Booth and Lafayette Baker had a long standing connection with this firm, and that it was to supply the ship for the original kidnapping and murder plot. The firm does business, we are told, at 178 1/2 Water Street.

The errors here are legion. First, no New York City directory for the years 1844-1865 lists any firm such as Chatter in shipping or any other business. Further, all reletemes sound to businesses at 1781/2 Water Street are tor Martin Bates, furrier and importer. This includes the year 1853, when documents in the Chaffey papers show that firm doing business at that address. In New York City's tax records there is no account of this firm, and in the New York Times's daily listing of shipping in and out of the port of New York for the years of the Civil War, there is not a single vessel mentioned which is registered to Chaffey. This for a company which regularly ships into and out of New York! Add to this the fact that the Chaffey correspondence—at least that which we've seen— is written, not in a letter book, but in an account ledger; that the ledger paper bears a British and not an American watermark; and that the handwriting is poor and in places illegible in an era when mercantile firms employed scribes specifically for their penmanship—add all this together and it is not hard to conclude that Chaffey and Biggs never existed, and that the papers of this spectral firm are clumsy fakes.

Much the same can be said for the Lafayette Baker papers, which Sunn calls "journals and cipher-coded manuscripts detailing the Lincoln kidnap-assassination conspiracy plot and cover-up." At the outset it is enough

that anything he sai build be unacceptable as evidence unless extensively corroborated. But internal evidence in the purported Baker journal makes certain that its information is a fabrication, and probably not by Baker.

We are asked to believe that, according to Baker, Stanton and his henchmen feared that Lincoln would not be reclected in 1864. Rather than have Democrat George McClellan take the Presidency, they would kidnap Lincoln, Vice President Hamlin, and Secretary of State Seward prior to the inauguration. Then the Committee on the Conduct of the War, controlled by Radicals, would appoint an interim president who would announce that McClellan could not take office. When Lincoln won the election, however, the plotters retained their plans, for they feared Lincoln would be too lenient on the South. Only this time it was Lincoln, Seward, and Vice President Andrew Johnson who were to be kidnapped, and ultimately killed.

Implicit in Baker's statement is a belief on Stanton's part that in the event of the death or disability of the President and Vice-President, the office would fall to the Secretary of State as senior cabinet officer. Equally implicit is the supposition that Andrew Johnson would deal leniently with the conquered South. Well, there are problems with this plot. First, Johnson, so far as anyone knew at this time, was in the Radical Republican camp; his denunciations of the leadership of the Confederacy and shrill calls for their execution were well known. More important, it is impossible to reconcile such blatant ignorance of statutory and Constitutional provisions governing presidential succession with Edwin M. Stanton's prior position as Attorney General in the cabinet of James Buchanan and his reputation as a Constitutional lawyer. The succession in 1865—as it had been since 1792—provided that the Presidency would pass to the President pro tempore of the Senate in the event of the death or disability of both the President and Vice-President. Lafavette S. Foster of Connecticut would automatically have become President (interestingly, this order of succession changed in 1886 to include cabinet officers in the succession order). Seward would never have entered the picture—which Stanton would have known. Stanton would also have known that, constitutionally, the Committee on the Conduct of the War could not have been empowered to appoint an interim President. Stanton would have known this, but the creator of this document obviously did not, and he consequently stuck his foot in it up to the hip.

Andrew Potter's papers dissolve even quicker under scrutiny. We are asked to believe that National Detective Police agent Potter smuggled these papers out of his organization's files. Among them is his account of the discovery that the man thought to be Booth was actually Captain Boyd, and the decision to cover the mistake to avoid embarrassment. In the light of what has already been shown about the supposed Boyd-Booth identification, Potter's statement is obviously false. It is made the less believable by the photograph of Potter in Sunn's pub-

licity package. It shows a more than 30 years old dressed in clothing which aid more than 30 years old the 1880's. If this is Potter, their putting the best light on it, we must believe that Andrew was a trusted secret agent at age fifteen!

With the George W. Julian Papers, we have a real gem. Julian, an organizer of the Republican Party, stood among the foremost Radicals. He kept a diary during the wat and after, a diary which his daughter loaned to historian Claude Bowers when he was researching his classic study of Reconstruction, The Tragic Era. When Bowers finished with the diaries, Julian's daughter destroyed the portions covering the Civil War and donated the temainder to the Indiana State Library. However, Sunn claims that they have a transcript of the 1865 portion of the diary that Bowers made before it was destroyed. And in the entry for April 24, 1865, there is an eight paragraph account of a meeting in Stanton's office in which Stanton and several others speak in panicked tones of what is in Booth's diary, which they have just received. Stanton gives the book to his trusted henchman Thomas Eckert with orders that it be kept safe and shown to no one. Note, this is April 24, two days before Booth—or Boyd, if you will—is killed. It is claimed that the diary was found in Booth's abandoned coat, and rushed to the War Department.

There are several problems here. First, a search of the Claude Bowers Papers at Indiana University reveals no correspondence to indicate that Bowers kept a transcript of the Julian diary of any portion of it. Second, anyone who has read The Trugic Era knows that Bowers was a rabid anti-Radical. The book pours venom on Stanton, Ben Wade, and others. If Bowers really had such a diary account revealing a Radical involvement with Booth and a cover-up, it is inconceivable that he would not have used it in his book. And the reason he did not use this entry is because he had the genuine April 24, 1865 entry before him. And anyone who is interested can read it today. Simply find a copy of the Indiana Magazine of History for December 1915, which contains an article titled 'George W. Julian's Journal.' Therein, interestingly enough, is an entry for April 24, 1865, the same date as in Sunn's alleged transcript. Only this entry has but one paragraph, and instead of recounting conspiracy and coverup, it describes a meeting of the Committee on the Conduct of the War. Instead of recording a meeting at Stanton's office, it tells of an audience with President Johnson during which Julian was "mortified" at the President's bad grammar (page 337). Obviously the fabricator of the more lurid version of the Julian diary didn't do his or her homework, else this earlier publication of the April 24 entry would have prevented the blundering forgery which is a major piece of evidence in Sunn's version of the conspiracy.

This sort of thing goes on and on. The film "proves" for us the old legend that Booth married Izola D'arcy. Further we are told that Booth and his wife lived on his farm near Harpers Ferry, and that it is to this farm that

he contact that have Booth owning land. There is a state ment by Michael O'Laughlen in which he details the involved in the massive plot and what was planned. The statement comes from the Osborn Oldroyd collection, ware told. Oldroyd, an eminent collector of Lincolnian kept inventories of his Lincoln items. Some are with his papers in the University of Chicago Library, and nowhed do they mention such a statement by O'Laughlen.

And there is testimony taken from the sister of Dav Herold, who fled with Booth and was later hanged wit the other conspirators. It is supposedly suppressed tes: mony which backs up the contention that Herold wi never with Booth on the escape. Rather, he was tidit. with Boyd in an attempt to find Booth. Well, the cred bility of this one doesn't last beyond the first sentence The initial question asked of Herold's sister is wheth or not her husband is Edward C. Nelson. She says "yes Yet church and census records verify that her husbar was really Frederick M. Nelson! Is it not reasonable! expect that after thirteen years of marriage Mrs. Nels would know her husband's given name? Additional erro abound in this obviously bogus testimony. Oh, yes, at in the revelation from Mrs. Edward Nelson-or was Frederick?—is the tantalizing fact that her brother Dav Herold kept a diary in 1865 and that a relation of he had it. Since this is the only hint to date of a Herold diar and since it comes from a suspect document, any date Herold diary which may hereafter come to light must cetainly be viewed with caution.

Sunn's story line claims that David Herold was captuit only the day after the assassination and then sent off wit Boyd to capture Booth. To support this they cite a tewis poster for Booth, Surratt and Herold, in which the phoof Herold is the same as a later view in which he is har cuffed after his capture at the Garrett farm on April 2 The conclusion is that this photo was taken April 1. Otherwise, how would the government have a photo Herold, in irons, to put on a wanted poster issued dabefore his capture? While superficially persuasive, the claim, too, dissolves under scrutiny. There are at least tv known versions of the reward poster dated April 20. addition to the version at which Sunn points its finge there is a poster which shows Herold as an adolesce. schoolboy, and a photograph purporting to be John Sutt. which is obviously erroneous. This is the poster distribut by Luther B. Baker at the behest of Lafavette C. Bake The Sunn version of the poster—though they don't me tion this—has a photograph of John Surratt taken approximately 1867. The second poster—with the la Surratt photograph and the post-capture Herold pho graph—was undoubtedly a response to the clamor to "souvenits" of the century's greatest crime. In sho Sunn's claim is based on a poster that postdates the hu: for the assassins by many months, possibly years.

It must be apparent by now that virtually all of the







HABOLD

War Department, Washington, April 20, 1865,

\$100,000 REWARD

Of our late beloved President, Abraham Lincoln,

S50,000 REWARD

\$25,000 REWARD

\$25.000 REWARD

Will be peed for the apprehenmon of David C. Harold, and her of Booth's accomplicate

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EDWIN M. STANTON, Secretary of War.

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STATE In whitem in the plant wind such sent and the plant of the termination of the termination; it almost our the characteristic making an accretion of about TWO BUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS.

Reward poster with a photograph of Herold as an adolescent and an erroneous photograph of John Surratt.

startling claims in the film are based upon documents which, if not outright forgeries, are so highly suspect as to make them inadmissable as evidence in any serious investigation. While Sunn has uncarthed a mass of documentary evidence, little would withstand the scrutiny of serious historians.

Just who had this material, and why, may never be known. There have been forgers and charlatans working in the field of Lincolniana ever since his death. Joseph Cosey produced some very well known Lincoln forgeries in the early 1900's. And the famous Minor collection of spurious documents relating to Lincoln and Ann Rutledge dates back to 1928. There have been many faked photos of Lincoln in death. It should hardly be surprising, then, that a lot of documents relating to the assassination have been manufactured. Americans do love a conspiracy, and in the case of Lincoln's death someone wanted one bad







RAROLD.

War Department, Washington, April 20, 1865.

S100,000 REWARD!

Reward poster showing post—capture photograph of David Herold and 1867 photograph of John Surratt.

enough to invent data supporting a plot of monumental proportions. We may never know the identity of the person or persons who concocted the material that Sunn has found, or when it was done. Indeed, the work is so clumsily amateurish that its authorship should charitably be left anonymous. One should not criticize Sunn Classic Pictures over much for using this material. Pictures are their business, not history. Given the material to make a box office hit with blockbusting revelations, they simply have not questioned their evidence too closely.

One might suppose that the point of all this is to advise the readers of CWTI not to pay good money to see "The Lincoln Conspiracy" when it comes to your theater. Not so. Go and see it. See it twice. Take your friends and your family. Watch it carefully. You will literally see history in the making. Look with a rareful eye and an open mind: there is, after all, the remote possibility that they really have something. The picture is based on far more documents than we can discuss here, and there is always the chance that they have turned up worthwhile new material; after all, only last year the "lost" manuscript account of the assassination by Louis J. Weichmann—undeniably genuine—finally came out in print.

But watch for the innuendo, the stretched truth. Keep in mind the evidence that the film is based upon, and what has been shown here about the evidence. Then decide for yourself. That is the point of this editorial. To urge you not to walk out of that theater unquestioningly accepting what you have seen as being the truth. Because once that happens, then we have all begun to lose touch with our past—and without that there can be no sure grip on the future.

And then, if there is anyone who still buys what this film has to offer. Boy! can I make you a deal on the Brooklyn Bridge.

William C. Davis Editor

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RG 60, Records of the Department of Justice Attorney General's Papers- Letters Received

- 1. Letter from John Wilkes Booth to his mother, undated (2 sheets 6 pages)
- 2. Letter from John Wilkes Booth to "to whom it may concern", -- 1864, (Alsheets 6 pages)

by Mr. Gay
To be delivered/to the FBI for study.

The receipt on loan from the National Archives of the records listed above is hereby acknowledged. It is expressly agreed that they will be carefully protected against any injury or loss, kept in their protect order or sequence, and returned promptly on or before the above-stated "Date due" unless special permission for an extension of the loan for a specified period of time has been obtained from the above-named Division or Branch of the National Archives.

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